

Advanced Esthetics of Advanced Dermatology Care

Fraxel Re:pair Co2 Laser Treatment Information

General Information about Fraxel Re:pair® Laser Treatment

The Fraxel Re:pair® Laser treatment vaporizes and penetrates deep into the skin to remove old, damaged skin cells and stimulate your body's own natural healing process. It's used to help tighten the skin, improve overall skin tone and texture, soften fine to moderate wrinkles, improve the appearance of depressed acne scars as well as age spots caused by sun damage. It can be used to treat not only the face, but other delicate areas like the back, neck, chest, and hands.

Other non-invasive, non-ablative treatments provide gentle enhancements with shorter healing time and minimal side effects, but require numerous treatments over several months to achieve results. Traditional ablative laser treatments produce significant results by vaporizing skin tissue, but have more significant side effects, risk of complications and prolonged healing of 1-2 months with prolonged redness up to 3-6 months. The Fraxel Re:pair® uses a sophisticated method of traditional ablative laser energy and cell sparing technique to precisely treat thousands of microscopic areas of your skin. The Fraxel Re:pair® treatment offers intense focused treatment with intact skin cells left between the lasered off deep columns. This allows faster healing with greatly reduced risk of complications, producing significant optimal results, with immediate skin tightening and noticeably smoother, younger, healthier skin.

The recovery time is approximately 7-14 days; however, prolonged redness may last up to 3 months. Clinical studies show significant results are achieved with only one treatment. Optimal improvement is usually visible in about 2 to 3 months, and continued improvement is noted as collagen is still being stimulated up to 6 months.

Before Treatment:

For best results, protect your skin from tanning and burning as UV damage will make it increasingly difficult to repair your skin and will decrease the effectiveness of your laser treatment. Direct sun exposure and/or tanning beds must be avoided for several months following while the skin is healing and still pink/red. You will need to schedule at least 1 week off from work, plan on staying indoors for 1-2 weeks, and practice sun avoidance for 1-2 months. You must not plan any activities in the sun for 1-2 months following treatment, or schedule any other surgical procedures (medical or cosmetic) within 1 month prior to or following treatment.

Arrange for a responsible adult to escort you to and from the clinic the day of your treatment, as driving following treatment is prohibited. Please be sure to provide us with the name and phone number of your escort. You must also arrange for a responsible adult to care for you for the first 24 hours following treatment. You may need additional help for the first week, so arrange for backup help as well.

You will also need to prepare your home environment: make sure that you have a room that is free from direct sunlight. Blinds and drapes are sufficient. Vacuum the room and laundry linens before your treatment to cut down risk of infection. To also help prevent infection, an oral antibiotic will be prescribed and started the day before treatment and continued for approximately one week. You will also start applying a topical ointment the morning before your treatment as directed to prepare your skin for treatment. (You will have applied it a total of three times before the treatment.) Valtrex may also be prescribed to take as a preventative measure if you have a history of cold sores. Prescriptions for reducing pain and anxiety will be prescribed to increase comfort during the treatment. You will bring these two medications to the clinic the day of your treatment, and will be instructed by your medical provider if and when to take them.

Have all of your prescriptions filled and purchase all necessary wound care supplies (list provided by us) before your treatment, including a broad spectrum sunblock with SPF 40 or above. Once the skin is healed, you will be instructed to apply sunscreen liberally for 3 months. You may also want to purchase oral Benadryl to help relieve itching at night. Avoid anything that increases bleeding and bruising for 7-14 days prior to treatment to minimize bruising / bleeding (e.g. Alcohol, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Fish oil, high dose Vitamin E, Garlic and any other supplements, etc.). Use Tylenol Extra Strength as an alternative if needed. Please let us know if you are on any herbal or non-prescription supplements. You may also be instructed to discontinue Coumadin (Warfarin) 5 days prior if advised and approved by your primary care provider.

Day of Treatment:

You will be instructed to take your oral pain medication that can cause nausea/vomiting if taken on an empty stomach, so you must eat a light meal 1-2 hours prior to your treatment. Wear clothing that can be easily removed from the treatment area, (eg. front-buttoned shirt) and bring along a spare. Do not wear make-up or contact lenses. Bring hair

bands and ties to keep hair off your face and neck: make sure they are soft and not too tight, as you may need to keep them on for 48 hours. Also bring your post care/wound instructions with you the day of your treatment (this will be provided at your consultation), so that we can review them with you. Please arrive 60 minutes before your scheduled time. The procedure takes approximately one to two hours for a full face, however, plan to be here for about 3-4 hours as the topical and injected anesthetics take a while to achieve adequate control. Also, be sure to schedule your follow up appointment for 3-4 days following treatment.

Since Fraxel Re:pair® treatment is quite painful, a topical anesthetic ointment is applied to the treatment area approximately 30-60 minutes prior to treatment in order for the anesthetic to take full effect. Additional nerve blocks and subcutaneous injected anesthetic may be administered as well. Fraxel Re:pair® treatment is performed right in Advance Dermatology Care outpatient surgical suites using only outpatient anesthesia. If you are having a significant area of your skin treated, an additional pain management plan will be developed to maximize your comfort during the procedure.

Laser eye shields or goggles will be provided. If the area to be treated includes the eyelids, a numbing medicine and laser eye shields (intraocular) will be placed like a contact lens on top of the surface of the eye.

After Treatment:

Following treatment, your skin may feel as though it is sunburned and abraded, and it will be swollen and pink/red. There may also be bleeding. Because the laser beam penetrates deep into the dermal layer, serous (clear or slightly yellowish) fluid and/or blood may ooze onto the skin. Crusting and/or scabs will form as the fluids dry.

To reduce swelling and for pain relief you should place ice packs or frozen peas on the treated area for 5 minutes at a time, every 1-2 hours for the first 2-3 days. You may also take Tylenol 500mg, two tablets, every 6 hours. Keep your head elevated while resting for the first few nights, as this will help reduce swelling and promote healing.

Proper wound care is essential in preventing post-procedural complications. You will be instructed to do vinegar soaks every 2-3 hours for the first 72 hours following treatment to prevent infection. After that, you'll continue to wash with vinegar soaks 2-3 times a day for one week and then switch to a gentle cleanser. After each soak, you will need to apply Aquaphor generously over the entire treatment area to keep your skin hydrated. Keeping the treated area moist will help prevent crusting and subsequent scarring, and increase healing. Finishing the prescribed oral antibiotics, and practicing good hand-washing will reduce the risk for developing an infection. Do not shower the treated area for 48 hours following treatment, and limit movement to treatment area. Avoid vigorous exercise for 2 weeks following treatment.

Your skin will naturally bronze over the next week or two, and eventually peel and exfoliate normally. Do not pick, scratch or rub the treated areas. Itching may also occur as your skin begins to heal. Topical Benadryl can be applied throughout the day to provide relief, and oral Benadryl taken at night. Avoid scratching the area; some people need to use occlusive dressings (e.g. Tegaderm) to protect the area from scratching to avoid scarring the skin. After the initial healing phase you'll be instructed to apply a broad spectrum sunscreen of SPF 40 or higher, and re-apply it generously throughout the day to minimize the risk for hyper-pigmentation.

Other Side effects and Possible Complications:

Scarring is a possibility because of the disruption of the skin's surface and/or abnormal healing with raised scars. With a history of abnormal raised scars (keloids), this treatment is not advised. Scarring may also occur from infection, so it is important to follow all post-treatment instructions carefully. Rarely, a downward pull of the eyelid (ectropion) can result after treating the around-the-eye area. Flare-up of acne or formation of milia may occur due to the use of Aquaphor, which is a semi-occlusive dressing ointment used to keep the skin moist and promote healing; do not pick or squeeze, as scarring would occur. Milia and/or acne flares will subside as the skin heals.

The treated area may heal with darker skin color (increased, or hyper-pigmentation). This occurs more frequently after exposure of the area to sun and with darker colored skin. The treated area must be protected from exposure to the sun (sunscreen for 6 months after treatment) to minimize the risk for hyper-pigmentation. These spots usually fade in three to six months. It is also possible to experience opposite color changes, as the treated area loses pigmentation (hypo-pigmentation) and becomes a lighter color than the surrounding skin. In some cases these pigment changes can be permanent. Wearing a broad spectrum sunscreen of SPF 40 or higher and re-applying it throughout the day is extremely important during the healing process and/or while the skin is still pink/red. In addition, wearing wide brimmed hats, and/or sun protective clothing is highly recommended when out in the elements.