



Pulsed Dye Laser Treatment of Vascular Lesions

- Patient's Guide -



Lions Laser Skin Centre
The Skin Care Centre
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Pulsed Dye

Pulsed Dye Laser Surgery was developed as a non-scarring method of treating vascular (red) skin lesions. This laser produces brief pulses of intense yellow light that heat and destroy the abnormal blood vessels found in port wine stains and telangiectases (often referred to as "broken veins" or "spider veins"). Because the yellow laser light is relatively selective for blood vessels, pulsed dye laser treatment is associated with a lower incidence of scarring than with other treatment methods.

Before your Treatment

If your lesion is in a very noticeable area such as the face, you may want to arrange your schedule to allow for one to two weeks of healing, since bruises and crusts will probably occur. After we assess your condition and discuss the treatment, you will be required to sign a consent form, as with any medical procedure. The lesion will be photographed before and after treatment to document your progress.

During your Treatment

If the area to be treated is large, test patches may be done to determine the dose of light that will produce the best result; smaller lesions may be treated fully at the first visit. Each laser flash treats an area about the size of a pencil eraser. The laser light is delivered to the lesion through a flexible hand piece, which is held by the physician. Laser exposures feel like a loosely-drawn elastic snapped against the skin. Everyone in the room must wear protective goggles. The length of each treatment session depends on the size of the area to be treated.

After your Treatment

Immediately after the treatment, the treated skin becomes gray and slightly raised. Within an hour, these areas become dark red and black and the surrounding skin becomes red and swollen. The area may feel warm for several days, like a mild sunburn. A dark scab or crust may form in the treated area. These changes should resolve in about 10-21 days. For the first four days after treatment, it is necessary to apply Polysporin (or another topical antibiotic) twice a day and to avoid cosmetics to reduce the possibility of infection. Cosmetics can be applied after this four day period.

Follow-up

The second visit will be two to three months later in order to allow sufficient time for the lesion to fade. Any subsequent treatments are carried out at intervals no sooner than every two months.

Outcome

Most patients with port wine stains experience a satisfactory lightening response from this treatment. Several treatments are often needed to achieve significant lightening. Most patients with "spider" or "broken" veins on the face and chest also experience excellent results. Treatment of spider leg veins with the pulsed dye laser is not as successful as a procedure known as Sclerotherapy. If you have spider leg veins, you may wish to discuss this with your Dermatologist during your consultation at the Lions Laser Skin Centre. The Pulsed Dye Laser is not a treatment for varicose veins.

Questions

We will be happy to answer any questions during your consultation visit.

Skin Care Following Laser Treatment

1. Keep the site clean. Gentle cleansing twice a day with water and a mild soap is helpful.
2. Avoid cosmetics on or near the treated area for four days or until all the scabs or crusts have healed.
3. Use Polysporin ointment (or Bactroban or Bacitracin ointment) twice a day for four days. You may want to cover the area with a loose sterile, non-stick dressing such as Telfa.
4. Do not attempt to remove scabs, scaling or crust by force since this can cause scarring. These will fall off naturally in 1 to 2 weeks.
5. If any problems, pain, bleeding, or infection (redness or drainage after 48 hours) occur, please call the Lions Laser Skin Centre at **875-4682 or 875-5151**. For emergencies after office hours and on weekends, please contact your Laser Surgeon (phone number listed in the White Pages).

***The Lions Laser Skin Centre is supported by
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***The information in this document is intended solely for the person
to whom it was given by the health care team.***

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