

Contour Laser Resurfacing

Laser resurfacing has been practiced for several decades, and is a safe and effective way to improve your skin.

It's an 'incisionless' procedure, using a new generation laser system that removes the top layer of skin and coagulates layers beneath the skin surface allowing the doctor precise control in promoting the regrowth an improved skin tone and texture. Its recovery time makes it an attractive alternative to face-lift surgery.

What conditions can be treated with Contour?

Contour is appropriate for skin resurfacing and applications requiring ablation and coagulation of skin blemishes which include: Wrinkles, Acne Scars, Solar Lentiginos, Actinic Keratoses, Syringomas, Hypertrophic Scars, and Surgical Scars.

What will the Contour laser do?

Your doctor will use Contour to remove thin layers of your skin's surface, which will be replaced by younger skin growth. Only Contour has the ability to provide a treatment that is customised to your skin condition. Your wrinkles will soften and become less noticeable, some will disappear, and pigmented lesions will greatly improve.

What areas can be treated?

All skin areas can be treated. Popular areas are the face, neck, chest and hands. Discuss your needs with your doctor.

What will happen during the procedure?

Your treatment team will administer a pain relief injection and topical anaesthesia after discussing the options with you. Photos will be taken of the area to be treated. Your eyes will be protected with safety shields or glasses. Contour's laser beam will be delivered through a computer-controlled device that automatically scans the area of your skin being treated. You may hear a snapping or popping noise as the laser gently removes the outer skin cells. Your procedure may take between a few minutes to half an hour, depending on the size of the area to be treated and the depth of your peel.

What aftercare will I need?

It is important to follow your physician's instructions. The top layer of your skin will re-grow and be able to be covered with make-up in about a week. Your new skin will be very sensitive to ultra-violet light, so you must avoid sun exposure until fully healed approximately 12 weeks. If you have to go outdoors, you must cover your skin, wear a hat and use a good sunblock.

How long will it take me to recover?

Your healing time will depend on your actual treatment depth, and you may experience erythema (redness) which may last several weeks. Healing time does vary among individuals and may take 7-14 days, which is the minimum time you should take off work. Your physician can answer questions about temporary changes to your skin appearance, and how it may be camouflaged.

What should I expect after treatment?

It will take a few days to replace the surface of your skin. Redness is common, and swelling may be present in the areas treated, but this should subside within a couple of days depending on the depth and intensity of treatment. Your doctor will instruct you on how best to care for your healing skin. Your skin will have a residual pink or red colour that will dissolve over time.

Is there a risk of infection?

Following the correct aftercare procedures prescribed by your physician will reduce the risk of infection. Skin infections such as bacterial or viral sores may develop. Individuals with a history of herpes cold sores should notify their treating doctor so that a prescription for anti viral medication may be issued to prevent an outbreak. Bacterial infections are possible but rare if all aftercare instructions are followed. You will be requested to return for follow-up visits to make sure everything is progressing well.

What are the side effects?

As with any surgical procedure, there are risks and side-effects associated with laser skin resurfacing. Your doctor will review with you in detail any risks involved in the procedure.

Is the procedure painful?

Yes. However this is well managed by either a topical or local anaesthetic during the procedure. Sedation can also be provided. Most patients describe the post-procedure feeling as being like a bad sunburn, but this feeling will subside in a few days. Cold compresses will also help subdue the discomfort.

How soon will I see results?

Because your skin will heal over a period of several weeks, you may not see the final results until then. As your skin heals, and as new collagen regenerates and fills in the lines and wrinkles, your results will continue to improve. Results will continue to improve for months.

What are the unwanted side effects of Contour resurfacing?

Deeper peels will naturally produce more inflammation, oozing and crusting. This can be expected to occur with the deeper Contour resurfacing procedure and is a normal part of the recovery.

Persistent erythema (redness) may develop and can be more difficult to hide for men (without makeup).

After the skin regenerates, it may remain red for prolonged periods, especially for those with a tendency to blush/flush.

In patients with olive or darker complexion, there may be an increased risk of uneven darkening of the skin after the procedure. This can be treated with a bleaching cream. Rarely, the skin may lose pigment and appear whiter.

Other forms of scarring such as keloids and thick scars are rare but more likely with deeper resurfacing. Certain areas such as the neck, chest, deltoids and upper back are more likely to develop keloid scarring. Scarring is also more likely if the wound gets infected.

Is Contour laser resurfacing suitable for everyone?

In certain circumstances we may not treat:

- Pregnant or breast-feeding women
- Children under the age of 18 without parental consent
- Any area where current significant skin disease or infections such as cold sores are present
- Patients with (darker) skin types 5-6 are at greater risk of post-treatment pigmentation
- Individuals with a history of keloid scarring
- Anyone with an emotional, mental or medical condition that may lead to unrealistic expectations

Procedural consent for Contour laser resurfacing

Before you undergo Contour resurfacing, make sure you have read and fully understood the background information on the procedure. To get the most out of it, you need to understand the nature of the procedure, the associated benefits and risks, as well as the available treatment options.

Photos are routinely taken before treatment as a visual record. These may be used for teaching purposes and may be shown for scientific purposes including publications in medical journals. There will be no identification of the images, and they will remain the property of Illawarra Dermatology and Laser Clinic.

For best results, sun avoidance and protection is important to minimise persistent redness and increased pigmentation of the skin after the procedure. In a minority of patients, the Contour resurfacing procedure may not match the patient's expectation. As it's not possible to predict a less-than-perfect response, Illawarra Dermatology and Laser Clinic is unable to guarantee expected outcomes.

By signing the informed consent, you acknowledge that all the above issues relating to the procedure have been addressed; and that you've been given ample opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns relating to the procedure.

Name of patient _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____

Name _____ Date _____

Post Treatment Response for Contour Laser Resurfacing

The procedure produces a burn that must heal. The treated areas of your skin will be reddened and you may experience slight bumps that take hours or days to resolve. Blistering and bruising may occur within the first 3 days, please treat these areas very gently. After a few days your skin may develop a brown crusting this must be kept moist and not picked, it will resolve spontaneously. Once healed your skin will look pink and this will gradually fade over the next 12 weeks. You will be asked to return 1 day and 1 month post treatment. Follow-up Contour procedures should be delayed for 8 weeks.

The longer term treatment goal is collagen remodeling resulting in improvement in wrinkles after 3 to 6 months.

Post Treatment Care

You must apply a barrier to your newly developing skin to protect it from the external environment. You can do this by using Vaseline. This must be used for several days as it is very important that the healing area remains moist. You should bathe your skin with a gentle soap free cleanser.

Cold compresses covered with a cloth can be applied for 10minutes every hour and may help reduce the sunburn feeling.

After a few days you should be able to use moisturizer to keep your treated skin moist.

You must avoid sun exposure or tanning booths. A sunblock containing Zinc oxide or titanium dioxide should be applied 15minutes prior to sun exposure and reapplied every 2 hours. A hat if in direct sunlight is also very important.

A maintenance program can be developed for you by our trained nurses with our range of skin care products.