

LASER SKIN RESURFACING

Our skin ages due to sun exposure, environmental and genetic factors, and smoking. As the skin ages, it begins to lose elasticity, collagen breaks down, and wrinkles form. There are many types of non-surgical skin treatments to address facial and neck wrinkles. These include chemical peels, microdermabrasion, and laser resurfacing. However, chemical peels and microdermabrasion only treat superficial, mild wrinkles. Only laser resurfacing can address deep layers of wrinkles, acne scarring and other types of skin conditions. It will also eliminate brown spots, spider veins and tightens the skin.

WHY LASER RESURFACING?

Laser skin resurfacing is still the gold standard for improvement of wrinkles and can remove decades of aging in a short period of time. The procedure is performed with an “ultra-pulsed” CO2 laser. This is an ablative type of laser that uses a specialized beam of light energy that is absorbed by the skin, reorganizes collagen fibers, tightens the skin and greatly reduces wrinkles.

There are two basic types of resurfacing: aggressive full resurfacing and fractional resurfacing. Fractional resurfacing basically means that a fraction of the total skin surface area is being treated. The amount of down-time depends on the depth of the beam, the total surface area treated and the number of passes. Be wary of promises of “light peels” with minimal down-time.

This really means little to no satisfactory results and only less money in your wallet. Also beware of those promising that a process called “Thermage” gives the, “same results as laser resurfacing with much less down-time.” There is no comparison between CO2 laser and Thermage. Thermage gives little to no results and is sold as a procedure by those not trained in CO2 laser surgery. The more down-time a patient is willing to accept, the greater the results. It is not too much to endure to have 10 -14 days of healing to take away 30 – 50 years of sun damage and aging. Dr. Mueller has been performing CO2 laser resurfacing for over 15 years.

Although Dr. Mueller has used almost every skin laser on the market over the years, he uses the Lumenis Active FX and Deep FX CO2 laser for its superior results and predictability.

AM I A CANDIDATE FOR LASER RESURFACING?

Laser resurfacing can be safely performed on patients of all ages. Ideal patients are those with mild to moderate facial wrinkles, little to no skin sagging and those with red and brown sun or age spots. If a patient has deep skin wrinkling and significant sagging skin, a face lift procedure would be more beneficial in combination with CO2 skin resurfacing.

THE PROCEDURE AND RECOVERY

Patients can choose to have selected areas treated such as the periocular (eye) and perioral (nasolabial fold, upper and lower lip and chin areas), or they can have the entire face and / or neck treated. The length of the procedure depends on what areas are being treated, the number of passes, and whether any other procedures (such as lip and nasolabial fold fillers) are also being performed. The procedure can be performed with either local anesthesia or IV anesthesia.

Topical gel anesthetics are used as well.

As stated, the amount of healing down-time depends on the patient. A light fractional resurfacing will take 3 – 5 days to heal. A moderate to aggressive fractional, multi-pass treatment will take 7 -14 days to heal with the patient being able to wear makeup after about 7 – 9 days. An aggressive full laser resurfacing will take 3 – 4 weeks to heal with the patient able to wear makeup after 12 – 14 days. This is where the consultation with Dr. Mueller is very important. After a full examination and a discussion with the patient, the exact treatment type can be customized. Dr. Mueller also customizes a pre- and post-laser skin regimen to help prevent post-operative complications. Following this prescribed treatment is paramount to the success of the healing process. You will see how simple it is to turn back the hands of time

