

Redwood Family Dermatology

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IPL Patient Information Sheet

What is IPL and How Does it Work

IPL stands for Intense Pulsed Light. This device is non-invasive technology that uses broad-spectrum light to improve skin texture and tone with photorejuvenation. It targets the unwanted discoloration, heats and destroys it without causing damage to the surrounding skin. It is most commonly used on the face, neck, chest and back of hands treating brown spots, redness, broken capillaries, Acne, and wrinkle reduction. Most skin conditions require 2-3 treatments to achieve desired results, and may be combined with other procedures to enhance results. Your practitioner will advise you on your individualized treatment plan during your consultation.

What to Expect During the Treatment Process

The device has a mild to moderate level of discomfort during the treatment. Topical anesthetic may be used to decrease the level of discomfort. If your plan includes topical numbing this will be applied during your numbing appt which is scheduled 60min prior to your procedure. A cooling gel is applied to the skin during the treatment which acts as a conductor as well as cools the skin for comfort. Most people describe the treatment as feeling like a “small snap of a rubber band”. The treatment takes approximately 30min and is generally well tolerated by patients. Immediately after the treatment your skin may be bright red and feel like a sunburn. This will diminish greatly within 2-24 hours, but residual redness and mild swelling can last up to 3 days for some. When treating brown spots they will appear darker initially and may become scaly. Over the course of 7-21 days the brown spots will become lighter and/or flake off. Following a gentle skin care routine and all post procedure instructions will allow for optimal healing and improvements noted to your skin in approximately 4 weeks after your first treatment.

Side Effects/Precautions to be Aware of:

Redness, Mild Swelling, Mild Burning: This is an expected reaction to the procedure and will self resolve. This will last a few hours and up to 3 days. Applying a cold compress, use of oral NSAIDs (i.e Aleve, Advil) or Tylenol, and increased use of moisturizers will be reviewed by your provider to assist with healing and discomfort.

Swelling: Some patients may experience a moderate amount of swelling that may develop on day 1 after the treatment. Use of cold compresses and sleeping slightly elevated can help reduce this.

Blistering: Blisters can occur with any laser treatment as a result of creating too much heat in the skin. If this occurs apply vaseline and contact your provider for any further treatment.

Pigment changes: This is an unwanted change in the skin color, darkening or lightening. This is a side effect that generally occurs if **strict sun protection guidelines** are not followed. If this occurs please contact your provider.

Medications: It is important to inform your healthcare provider of all medications and supplements you take. Some medications may cause the skin to be more sensitive to the treatment.

Herpes Simplex Virus/Cold Sores: please notify your provider if you have a history of this. You may need to be treated with an oral antiviral medication prior to treatment. If you have an open sore, your treatment will need to be rescheduled.

Past Medical History: Please be sure to inform your healthcare provider of all medical history.

IPL Pre/Post Care Instructions

Pre-Treatment Instructions:

- 1. 4-6weeks prior to procedure:**
 1. Discontinue all tanning and self tanning products.
- 2. 5-7days prior to procedure:**
 1. Begin oral Arnica if desired (supplement to decrease bruising/swelling)
 2. If you have had any change to medications, ie antibiotics for illness, call your provider to ensure treatment may be completed as planned.
- 3. 1 day prior to procedure:**
 1. Shave treatment area if needed. (Men's facial hair should be removed)
- 4. Day of Procedure:**
 1. Tylenol may be taken 1 hour prior to treatment for pain/swelling.
 2. Arrive to procedure with the area ready to be treated, no makeup and skin should be completely clean and shaved. (Sunscreen/light moisturizer is ok to apply morning of treatment)

Post Procedure Instructions:

- 1. Immediately after Procedure:**
 1. Skin will be bright red and feel like a mild sunburn. Cold Compresses applied for 10min every 2-4 hours, and calming creams, given by your provider, will help reduce discomfort and swelling.
 2. Tylenol, NSAIDs (such as Advil, Aleve or Ibuprofen), topical over the counter hydrocortisone, or topical Arnica may be used for swelling, and discomfort if desired.
 3. Brown spots will be darker in color and will continue to darken and/or look like "flakes of pepper" on the skin. They may become scaly and dry and will either flake off or lighten up over the next 7-21days. (hands, chest and arms take longer than face)
 4. Makeup may be applied if desired.
 5. Strict Sun Protection must be followed for a min of 3 weeks post procedure. Skin will be sensitive to sun light, causing discomfort and may cause unwanted pigment changes to skin. A Broad Spectrum 30 SPF or higher needs to be applied every morning and reapplied every 2 hours if outdoors. Hats, and additional clothing to be worn for all outdoor activities.
 6. Avoid vigorous exercise, excessive sweating, hot tubs and saunas until initial redness/irritation has resolved.
- 2. Day 2-Day 21 after Procedure:**
 1. Swelling may increase on day 2-3 after treatment. Follow all above instructions and if possible sleep on your back and slightly elevated (extra pillows) for 1-2 nights to assist with swelling.
 2. Resume regular skin care regimens once skin is completely healed or as directed by your provider.
 3. Avoid exfoliating or picking at brown spots, they will clear and lighten on their own.
 4. **Call your provider if any side effects occur; blistering, pigment changes, cold sore breakouts or any other concerns. Office hours Mon-Fri 8am-5pm; after hours on call providers are available 7days/week. (707)545-4537**