



Laser Resurfacing

Laser resurfacing improves visible signs of aging and regenerates new healthy skin that last for decades. The secret behind this innovative technique is the employment of a specialized laser for the reduction of superficial and deep facial wrinkles, vaporization of skin irregularities, and improvement of skin texture and appearance. Removal of damaged skin and stimulation of collagen production are the key to restoration of a natural, refreshed appearance.

The following information will answer the most commonly asked questions regarding what to expect after surgery. It is highly advised that you and your caretaker read this packet **SEVERAL** times **BEFORE** surgery to adequately prepare for the recovery process. Those who follow these instructions faithfully generally have the smoothest post-operative course and proper healing.

Recommended Items to Purchase: Distilled White Vinegar, Distilled Water, Bowl for Mixed Solution, Gauze, Aquaphor (large tub)

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After Surgery Patient Care & Cleaning Instructions

1. Clean treated areas with vinegar soaks **at least 6 times per day (or every 2 hours while awake)** for one week. Dip a clean gauze into the mixed solution and use a moderately firm scrub to remove any remnant ointment, debris, and yellow scabbing. Gently pat your face/neck dry. Then, apply a thick coat of Aquaphor ointment over all treated areas. Soaks should be performed for 20-30 minutes at a time. It is NOT necessary to perform these cleanings throughout the night. New cleaning and care instructions will be provided at the one week post-operative visit.
 - **Vinegar Soak Solution:** Mix 1 teaspoon of distilled white vinegar with 1 cup of distilled water. Keep the solution in the refrigerator to make treatment more soothing. Mix a fresh solution each day to prevent bacterial build-up and infection.
 - You should find the vinegar soaks soothing. If the solution is irritating, it may be diluted by using a ½ teaspoon of white vinegar with 1 cup of water.
 - This cleaning process is a lot of work and somewhat painful but extremely important. You must work at it diligently in order to get a great result and prevent infection.
2. Do NOT allow the face to scab and become dry. It is impossible to over lubricate. Aquaphor ointment should be applied in a thick layer similar to frosting a cake. It is important to remove and lift off all yellow scabs to allow for proper healing. If a yellow crust remains despite adequate soaks, place a very thick layer of Aquaphor ointment directly over the scab for 10 minutes. Then, massage the area to loosen the scab and lifting away the crust.
3. Daily showering is recommended with gentle hair washing with baby shampoo ONLY for 2 weeks. Do NOT use any other hair products during the first 2 weeks after surgery. Do NOT wear a shower cap/hair piece or use a blow dryer for 2 weeks after surgery. Do NOT wear makeup or use your regular skin care products for 2 weeks after surgery or on any unhealed/raw areas.
4. Swelling increases for 2-3 days following surgery. Use of cool compresses and head elevation is strongly recommended to help keep swelling to a minimum. Within 72-hours you will notice that the treated area resembles a deep sunburn that is sensitive and raw. You may also notice fluid exuding from the skin, which is temporary normal serous drainage.
5. Monitor for significant swelling, signs or symptoms of infection, cold sores, or other lesions/rashes. If there is concern for development of any of the above, please contact the office immediately at (737) 787 - 8200 to determine whether or not an in-office visit is necessary.



The 30-Day Recovery Guide: What to Expect from Day 0 to Day 30+

Dr. Givens strongly believes that patient education is key to a successful surgical recovery. Below is an easy to follow **30-day Laser Resurfacing Recovery Guide** so that you will know what to expect during the healing period. It is important to understand that the provided timeline represents a general recovery time frame and cannot be guaranteed.

Laser Resurfacing Recovery: Week 1

Day 0 (Surgery Day). Once surgery is complete, you will be taken to the recovery room where a specialized nursing team will monitor and care for you prior to your departure from the operative facility. You will need a friend or family member (no ride-hailing services or self-driving) to drive you to a home or hotel of your choice that is located within 30-minutes of the operative facility for the first night. You will need a caretaker to be available to you for at least the first 3 days after surgery. It is important to remain well lubricated, rest on your back in a recliner or in bed with your head elevated, and monitor for pain and nausea overnight. For those who have either elected or been required to remain in the post-surgery facility overnight, the nursing staff will be your assumed caretaker during your stay. Of note, observation in the overnight facility is determined PRIOR to scheduling surgery.

Day 1. You will come to the office the morning after surgery for a general cleaning and surgical check. Your caretaker must come with you to this appointment to both aid you physically and help you remember what is discussed during the visit. All of your treated areas will be cleansed and lubricated, and a thorough review of your at home cleaning routine will be provided. Daily showering is recommended with gentle hair washing with baby shampoo ONLY for 2 weeks. Do NOT use any other hair or facial products during the first 2 weeks after surgery.

Days 2-4. Swelling increases on days 2-3, but will usually peak around day 4 before gradually resolving. Within 72-hours you will notice that the treated area resembles a deep sunburn that is sensitive and raw. You may also notice fluid exuding from the skin, which is temporary normal serous drainage. Your cleaning/lubrication regimen is a lot of work and somewhat painful but extremely important. Your pain medication should be used sparingly and as prescribed by Dr. Givens. In addition, the use of cool compresses, head elevation, and Extra Strength Tylenol relieves discomfort and stinging best.



Day 5-7. You will come to the office on Day 5 for a wound check. You will be transitioned from Aquaphor ointment to a steroid cream between Days 5-7 at the discretion of Dr. Givens. Most patients “turn the corner” between days 5 and 6. By this time, the majority of patients no longer need prescription pain medication. While you will feel much better at the end of the first week, you must understand that this is NOT going to be your final result. Pause and read that again. At this point, your skin will have reepithelialized but remains delicate and quite red. Temporary discomfort and stinging may persist but to a lesser degree. This is NORMAL. You will see a significant improvement in the color, texture, and contour of your face and/or neck over the next few weeks to months.

Laser Resurfacing Recovery: Week 2

Days 8-14. Decrease vinegar soaks to 4 times per day on Days 8-10, then stop. You may now wash your face with tap water and a gentle, non-foaming facial cleanser. You should also start applying a zinc oxide/titanium oxide sun block without active chemical ingredients to both prevent irritation and hyperpigmentation of your newly resurfaced skin. You may still have some stinging and discomfort, and your skin will remain red-pink. This is NORMAL. At the end of the second week post-surgery, many patients feel “like themselves” again and are ready to return to work, school, or other obligations with a lifting restriction of no more than 15-lbs. Leisurely walking is encouraged. Do NOT perform household cleaning or any other activity that elevates your heart rate. Do NOT wear makeup or use your regular skin care products for 2 weeks after surgery or on any unhealed/raw areas.

Laser Resurfacing Recovery: Weeks 3 & 4

Days 15-30. You will begin to see real improvements in your face/neck color, texture, contour. However, it will take a MINIMUM of 3-6 months for the red tone of your skin to fade and a FULL year for the face/neck to reach their final outcome. It is not uncommon for milia, or small white bumps, to appear on your treated areas. While these can be gently scrubbed and removed, stubborn spots may require Dr. Givens’ assistance. You can now return to all regular activities and exercise without people noticing outward signs of your procedure. You may wear makeup if there are no remaining unhealed or raw areas.

Laser Resurfacing Recovery: Day 30 & Beyond

Day 30+. After the one month post-operative visit, you should be back to doing ALL normal activities and enjoying life with your new look. You may now resume your retinol-containing products and full skin regimen. Start slowly by using the retinol-containing products every other day to ensure your skin does not become irritated. Remaining follow-up visits with Dr. Givens (ie, 3-month, 6-month, 1-year) are to assess your progress. Photographic documentation will be performed at each visit as well. You will see great changes as your skin tone returns to normal.



Return to Normal Activity FAQs: Bathing, Beauty Care, Exercise, Work, & Things to Avoid

Bathing

- You may take a shower and wash your hair starting 24-hours after surgery (ie, Day 1 after your first post-operative office visit).
- Daily showering is recommended with gentle hair washing. Do NOT wear a shower cap for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Use baby shampoo ONLY for 2 weeks. Do NOT use any other hair products during the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- Blow drying hair on the COOL setting only is allowed after 2 weeks.

Skin Care, Makeup, Hair Care, & Salon Maintenance

- Do NOT use any facial cleansing or skin care products other than your vinegar soaks and Aquaphor ointment for 10 days. You may wash your face with a gentle, non-foaming cleanser followed by sunscreen application after 10 days.
- Makeup may be applied starting 2 weeks after surgery as long as no unhealed/raw areas remain.
- You may resume your regular skin care routine 2 weeks after surgery as long as no unhealed/raw areas remain. However, retinol-containing products may not be used until 1 month after surgery.
- You may have your hair washed at the salon 3 weeks after surgery, but a hand blow-dryer only must be used on the low setting.
- Avoid hair coloring for 3 weeks after surgery. A wig and/or artificial hair extensions may be worn starting 3 weeks after surgery.
- Eyebrow and lash treatments including waxing/sugaring and threading as well as spray tanning may be performed starting 6 weeks after surgery. Tattooing procedures may be performed starting 6 months after surgery.

Clothing Choices, Glasses, & Contacts

- Wear clothing that fastens in the front rather than clothes that pull over your head to avoid irritation and removal of regenerating skin for 2 weeks after surgery.
- You may wear glasses and contacts. If treatment was performed around the eyelids, do NOT wear contacts for 2 weeks.

Exercise & Other Extracurricular Activities

- During the first week after surgery, you are encouraged to leisurely walk. Do NOT perform strenuous activities such as cardio/aerobics, jogging, swimming, tennis, golf, Pilates, yoga, barre, spin, high intensity interval training, and weight-lifting for 3 FULL weeks.
- You should avoid any activity that increases your heart rate, even bedroom activities (ie, sexual activity of any type) for 3 FULL weeks.
- You may be “up and around the house” but do NOT perform house cleaning, bending, or lifting more than 15-lbs for 3 weeks.



Return to Work

- Most patients take about 2-3 weeks off from work, school, or other obligations. Depending on your individual recovery process and job requirements, you may be able to return sooner or need to wait a bit longer.
- If your job involves heavy lifting (ie, more than 15-lbs) or a significant amount of public contact, you will need to plan on taking a full 3 weeks off.

Things to Avoid

- Do NOT use Accutane (ie, Isotretinoin) during your recovery. Laser resurfacing is contraindicated for patients who are currently using or have used this product within 6-months of surgery.
- Avoid excessive facial expressions and emotional states (ie, crying, laughing, yawning), bending, lifting, and straining for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid direct application of ice to the face or neck as extremes of temperature can damage the healing tissues and result in an unsatisfactory outcome. Do NOT sleep with any cool compresses on your face or neck.
- Avoid use of hot tubs or extremes of heat for 3 weeks after surgery as this can dilate your blood vessels and cause improper healing.
- Avoid using any and all medications listed on the “Medications to AVOID Before Surgery” page of the website, which can be found under the Patient Resources tab of the toolbar then the Surgery & Post-Treatment Care drop-down menu.
- Avoid quickly rising from a sitting position. Instead, slowly stand and give yourself a few seconds before walking forward to ensure you do not become light-headed, dizzy, or unexpectedly syncopal.
- Avoid caffeine, tea, and other dehydrating substances. Drink plenty of fluids and electrolytes to stay hydrated.
- Avoid direct sun exposure to any treated sites for 12 months after surgery. Use sun protection including sun block, wide brimmed hats, and sunglasses.
- Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery while taking narcotic pain medication.
- Do NOT smoke, vape, or use any nicotine-related products (ie, nicotine patches, nicotine gum, chew/dip) as these substances cause significant and detrimental blood vessel constriction. Vessel constriction decreases required blood flow to the healing tissues of the face/neck and may ultimately result in delayed wound healing, unsatisfactory cosmetic outcome, and even skin necrosis.



What to Expect & Consider During Your Recovery

As with any major surgery, a laser resurfacing procedure carries the risk of bleeding, infection, pain, skin changes or loss, temporary or permanent facial nerve injury, paresthesia (ie, numbness), herpetic outbreak, hyperpigmentation, development of milia and/or facial acne, hair thinning or loss, corneal abrasion, blood clot formation, cosmetic abnormality, unsatisfactory scarring, and/or the need for additional surgery. The following information outlines what to expect and be aware of during the recovery process after laser resurfacing.

Swelling

Swelling increases for 2-3 days following surgery. Use of cool compresses, head elevation, leisurely walking, and avoidance of any and all medications listed on the “Medications to AVOID Before Surgery” page of the website will help to decrease swelling and inflammation. While the majority subsides within 2 weeks, it will take a MINIMUM of 6-8 weeks for ALL swelling to resolve and a FULL year for the face and neck to reach their final contour.

- **Cool Compresses**: Wash cloths dipped in ice water or cool gel packs can be applied around treated areas for 15-minutes a few times daily during the first week after surgery to help reduce swelling and discomfort. Do NOT apply direct ice as extremes of temperature can damage the healing tissues and result in an unsatisfactory outcome. Do NOT sleep with cool compresses on your face and neck.
- **Head Elevation**: Rest on your back with your head elevated above the level of your heart/chest by sleeping in a recliner or on 2-3 pillows in bed. You will notice that you tend to be more swollen upon waking in the morning and less by the evening. Do NOT sleep on your side or stomach for 3 weeks after surgery.

Changes to Skin Color & Texture

Your skin will have a tomato or cherry red coloring similar to a deep sunburn for a few weeks after surgery. This will gradually transition to a pink hue that will fade over the next few months. This is NORMAL. You will see a significant improvement in the tone, texture, and color of your skin over the next 3-6 months.

Hyperpigmentation

Some skin types are prone to hyperpigmentation, or dark spots, after laser resurfacing. Hyperpigmentation is triggered by sun exposure. Thus, avoidance of direct sun exposure and the use of sun protection (ie, sun block, wide brimmed hats, sunglasses) is necessary especially in the initial healing period. If you notice development of hyperpigmentation, call the office immediately as there are prescription-based topical creams available for treatment.



Pain & Discomfort

Skin sensitivity, burning, and stinging are expected, temporary, and very normal experiences during the healing and recovery process after laser resurfacing. While it may take 2-3 weeks for resolution, significant improvement is noticed after 1 week. Prior to surgery you will be provided with a series of prescribed medications that are important to take as instructed as each one serves a specific purpose in the recovery process.

- **Pain Medication:** Excessive intake of pain medication, particularly in the immediate post-operative period, often results in light-headedness, nausea, and constipation—making recovery more tedious. Thus, a regimen of cool compresses and Tylenol Extra Strength is often more effective. However, if the pain is severe, you may use your provided narcotic pain medication as prescribed by Dr. Givens. Remember to take pain medication after eating to avoid nausea. Do NOT take narcotic medication at the same time as Tylenol ingestion. If you develop narcotic-induced constipation, you may take an over-the-counter laxative or stool softener from your local pharmacy. Do NOT drive while taking prescription pain medication. Do NOT take aspirin or ibuprofen.
- **Anti-Depressant Medication:** It is not unusual for patients to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery no matter how much they wanted the operation and were educated on what to expect post-operatively. Remember, same day surgery does not mean same day results. If you are able to realize that this is a very temporary phase, the emotional aspect will resolve. If you take anti-depressant medications, please continue per your normal pre-surgical routine unless specifically instructed otherwise. If you experience any suicidal or homicidal ideations, please contact both your psychiatrist and Dr. Givens. While Dr. Givens does NOT prescribe anti-depressant medications, she would like to ensure that you have all of the care and treatment that you need after surgery.

Hair Thinning

There may be transient thinning of the hair in areas adjacent to treated regions of the hairline or diffusely on the scalp. This is known as “hair shock”, in which a stressor (ie, surgery) triggers hair loss temporarily. Unfortunately, it is completely unpredictable which patients will incur hair loss. Although the new hair shaft can take 3-6 months to visibly regenerate, rest assured your hair will return.

Infection & Cold Sores

Prior to surgery you will be provided with prescriptions for antibiotic and anti-viral medications. It is important to fill these prescriptions BEFORE your surgery, take as instructed, and make sure to finish the entire course as these medications serve a specific purpose in the recovery process. The first dose of each medication is to be administered BEFORE your surgery. The herpes virus is very common and an outbreak can lead to unwanted facial scarring. Whether or not you have a history of herpetic outbreaks is irrelevant as EVERY patient will be instructed to take the prescribed antiviral medication. If you develop cold sores, an allergic reaction, or signs/symptoms of an infection including persistent redness and/or drainage from incision sites, call the office immediately as new/different medications or treatments may be required.



Milia & Acne

Milia, or small white bumps, occur where the new layer of healing skin has overgrown the underlying glands. They may appear within the first 1-2 months after treatment and can be gently scrubbed for removal. However, persistent milia may require the assistance of Dr. Givens. Post-operative facial acne may occur as well. Please call the office if you are having an acne outbreak as medication may be required for treatment.

Scars & Revision Surgery

Any time a cut is made on the body there will be a scar. However, scar visibility depends on several factors. Laser resurfacing requires destruction and removal of specific skin layers to allow for collagen stimulation and smooth skin regeneration. The healing skin will have a deep red-pink hue with variable amounts of swelling initially. Most of the time, an experienced surgeon can produce long-lasting results that both of you are pleased with—often for *several* decades. However, you must remember that even in the most experienced hands, there are no guarantees in surgery. Further surgical intervention is NOT scheduled prior to the 6-month post-operative mark and more likely closer to a year unless absolutely necessary. It is imperative to allow for most if not all of the post-operative swelling and inflammation to resolve prior to further operation. Finally, you must understand that while surgery can improve the youthful appearance, it cannot stop the aging process of the body over time.



Conclusion: Summary on the Laser Resurfacing After Surgery Experience

1. The cleaning process during the first week after surgery is a lot of work and somewhat painful but extremely important. You must work at it diligently in order to get a great result and prevent infection. Your skin will have a tomato or cherry red coloring similar to a deep sunburn for a few weeks after surgery and will gradually transition to a pink hue that will fade over 3-6 months. However, it will take a FULL year for the face to reach its final contour.
2. Call the office if you experience a persistent temperature of 101°F or higher, sudden significant swelling or discoloration, unusual bleeding, non-serous discharge from the wound or other evidence of infection, or development of any drug reaction, hyperpigmentation, facial acne, or cold sores. There is a 24-hour answering service available during non-office hours for urgent post-operative concerns.
3. Each patient will have a unique experience, and you should always follow the directions provided by Dr. Givens. Those who educate themselves before surgery and follow Dr. Givens' post-operative care instructions usually have the easiest recoveries and the best outcomes.
4. Most of all—BE PATIENT during the healing process. Remember, same day surgery does NOT mean same day recovery. Healing is a gradual process. It is normal to be impatient and feel discouraged while waiting for swelling, bruising, and discomfort to diminish. Allow yourself extra rest, a nutritious diet to promote healing, and avoid stress during your recovery.