

## **LASER HAIR REMOVAL**

### **WHO IS SUITABLE ?**

Our lasers suit anyone with dark unwanted hair. White, blonde and grey hairs will not respond. Ginger and pale brown hairs respond poorly. Dark brown and black hairs do best. Men and women can be treated, as can all body parts, and all skin colours. We cannot treat you if you have even a faint sun tan or are about to get one. Laser treatment does not mix well with sunny holidays.

### **IS IT PERMANENT ?**

No, we do not claim permanence. Hair follicles have great regenerative powers. Most people will have long lasting benefits. The stronger the laser the greater the effect on the hair but the greater the risk of unwanted effects. Regular treatment also improves results. It is difficult to predict individual responses as many factors are involved: the thickness of the hairs, different body sites, hormonal differences, how black the hairs are and how strong a laser light can be tolerated. However in general the hair free intervals gradually lengthen and regrowth gets sparser and finer.

### **HOW DOES IT COMPARE ?**

Laser treatment will give you longer hair- free intervals than waxing, shaving, plucking, or depilatory creams. It can treat more hairs than electrolysis due to the size of the laser beam.

### **IS IT SAFE ?**

The laser makes an extremely powerful beam of red light. This can blind you or burn you if used wrongly. Care must be taken to protect eyes by limiting the number of people in the treatment room and wearing protective goggles during treatments. The strength of the laser must be carefully adjusted to avoid burns. We will keep the skin surface chilled with cold air and ice packs. It is not thought to cause cancer.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK ?**

The bright laser light will heat up anything that is dark. The hair follicles can be damaged by heating

up the black hairs in them. Remember that most of the follicles on your body are resting and hairless at any one time. These resting follicles will not be affected by the laser light. However by repeating the treatment with each new crop of hairs eventually most follicles will be lasered. A lasered follicle takes a long time to recover, depending on how hot it has got. The technique depends on there being more dark pigment in your hair than there is in your skin, so that the hair follicles can be heated whilst your skin is kept cool. This is why most unwanted effects occur in darker skin types. Recently suntanned skin is particularly vulnerable to dark marks. Fake tans will also cause problems.

### **WHICH LASER ?**

Most lasers and intense pulsed light sources will give good hair reduction in suitable patients when used correctly. Different lasers suit different skin colours. We use an Alexandrite laser on white to pale brown skins, and a long pulsed Nd:YAG on dark brown to black skins. We cannot treat sun tanned skins, including fake tans.

### **UNWANTED EFFECTS**

There is some discomfort, which is brief and can be relieved with the cold air. The treated area will be red and may have goose bumps for an hour or so. The skin may feel sensitive for a day or two. Some peeling or scabbing may occur with temporary changes in skin colour, usually in the form of dark marks. Under-powered treatment may stimulate hair growth. This is a possibility when being very cautious with brown skin types. Rare unwanted effects include scarring, patchy loss of skin pigment, loosening of dental veneers and thrombosis of small veins.

### **HOW STRONG ?**

The stronger you have the treatment the better the results on the hair but the more unwanted effects on the skin. With high power treatment these consist of redness, swelling and tenderness for a few days.

On darker skin types dark circles may form for a week or two. These occasionally fade to leave pale marks that last for many months. Photos can be seen on the website. For the longest hair free intervals in the least number of treatments you should have treatment at the limit of your skin's tolerance, this will mean experiencing a few of these unwanted effects. We will be guided by you as to how strong you would like your treatment.

#### WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED ?

It is very important that you stop plucking and waxing for many weeks before starting treatment. You can trim or shave. We know this may be difficult for you but is important for good results. You must also resist plucking hairs between treatments. Fake tan must have faded completely.

#### WHAT AFTER CARE IS NEEDED ?

A plain moisturiser such as Aqueous Cream should be applied gently to prevent peeling. You should also get into the habit of wearing a strong sun block on exposed areas. This should be factor 25 or stronger. This applies to all skin colours and is very important. If your skin darkens a little in the summer or while on holiday, then you will be more likely to get burnt at your next treatment.

#### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY CARE ?

Your treatment will be carried out by our qualified laser nurses, Sisters Waite, Sargent and May. The skin laser clinic is under the direct supervision of Dr M Rustin, Consultant Dermatologist, and Dr W Clayton, Laser Clinician.

#### EXPECTATIONS

It is difficult to predict exactly how well you will do. There are wide variations depending on body area, skin colour, hair colour and strength of treatment. As a guide:

Women with white skin and black hair treating underarms bikini and legs should have very scanty regrowth after 4 – 6 treatments.

Women with black facial hair and white skin should achieve good control, with hair free periods of 6 - 8 weeks and scanty regrowth after 6 treatments. You will probably want occasional top up treatments. Brown and ginger hair will do less well. White and blonde hairs will not respond.

Women with brown skin should achieve hair free periods of 4-6 weeks on the face and 8 –12 weeks

elsewhere. Regrowth will be finer but is likely to be persistent.

After 6 treatments women with black skin and African type hair should be hair free on the face for about 8 weeks. Elsewhere on the body the hair free period will be about 12 weeks. Regrowth should be fine and scanty. Only occasional top ups will be required.

Men's backs will become hair free for about 8 weeks with the regrowth getting finer after 6 treatments. You are unlikely to become completely hair free.

Men's beards take lots of treatments as hair in the goatee area can be very persistent. Shaving rash and ingrown hairs respond well to just a few treatments, especially in Afro-Caribbean skin types, although the beard can look patchy.

#### IS IT FOR ME?

Consider all this information carefully then come and talk it through. A consultation costs £40 and is refunded at your first treatment. The patch tests, which are essential before treatment can begin, also cost £40. Please ask if you would like a chaperone.

#### HOW TO FIND US

Parking is difficult at the Royal Free Hospital so it is best to use public transport if possible. The nearest underground station is Belsize Park on the Edgware branch of the Northern line, turn right out of the tube station. The North London over-ground train between Richmond and Stratford stops at Hampstead Heath just outside the hospital. Bus services 24, 46, 168, C11 and C12 pass by the hospital. The Skin Laser Clinic is at the rear of Clinic 6 in the Dermatology Department on the first floor.

#### PRICE GUIDE for each treatment session *(Only a guide – your price will be agreed at your consultation)*

Small areas e.g. underarms	£80
Full face	£100 - £130
Bikini Line	£100 - £200
Lower legs - pair	£200 - £400
Thighs - pair	£300 - £500
Shoulders	£200 - £300
Backs	£300 - £600

GIFT VOUCHERS are available.