

## **Co2 Laser Resurfacing Post-Operative Instructions**

*If you are in need of immediate assistance after hours, please go to the nearest emergency room. For general questions or need assistance that cannot wait until the next business day, you may call the answering service and they will get in contact with Dr. Rodrigues.*

### **In Preparation for Surgery**

1. Six weeks prior to laser resurfacing, strictly avoid all sun exposure and wear an SPF 30 sun-block on your face at all times.
2. Tobacco or nicotine use is strictly prohibited for patients undergoing laser resurfacing. Patients must not use these products for one month prior to the procedure and for 3 weeks after the procedure. Inform Dr. Rodrigues immediately if you smoke. Please be honest about your nicotine use; if you cannot adhere to these requirements, then he will not perform laser resurfacing on you.
3. At least 14 days prior, discontinue ALL medications containing aspirin or related products. This includes Bufferin, Excedrin, Motrin, Aleve, Nuprin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Indocin, Coumadin, and Plavix. These medications may cause excess surgical bleeding and should be avoided both before and after surgery. **TYLENOL** is the **ONLY NONPRESCRIPTION** analgesic that may be used safely before or after surgery. If in doubt, ask Dr. Rodrigues about which medication you may take. Also, discontinue use of Vitamin E; a single tablet multivitamin taken daily is okay.
4. Get plenty of rest, eat a balanced diet, and avoid excess alcohol ingestion 1 week prior to surgery.
5. Begin taking the prescribed antiviral medication 2 days prior to laser resurfacing, For example, if your laser procedure is on Monday, take your first antiviral tablet Saturday evening, then take 2 doses on Sunday, and take one tablet Monday morning with a very small sip of water.
6. If you take herbal or other “naturopathic” supplements, please bring this to the attention of Dr. Rodrigues.
7. It is helpful to pick up the following items before your laser resurfacing procedure. White Vingear, Gauze dressings, plain Crisco, Cetaphil Lotion, Aquaphor ointment.

### **The Morning of Surgery**

1. Take only the medications authorized by Dr. Rodrigues
2. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes that open down the front. Avoid wearing fine clothes since stains (ointment, blood, etc.) are possible.
3. Leave valuables (jewelry, money, etc) at home. Bring only essential items.
4. Ensure that an adult accompanies you.

### **Immediately Following Surgery**

1. Make a follow up appointment: Dr. Rodrigues will inform you when he needs to see you for your first postoperative visit. Please call the office 801.965.3600.

**Prescription Medications:** Dr. Rodrigues will determine your medications.

Nearly all prescription pain medications can have nausea and constipation as side effects. Consequently, use Tylenol first and reserve the prescription pain medication for more stubborn pain. Remember that pain will worsen with activity, movement, or vomiting. Control pain with bed-rest and medications, and being the antibiotic once you can comfortably tolerate oral intake. You can adjust how much pain medication you take by using the following table.

Mild Pain	2 Extra Strength Tylenol Tablets	No Prescription Pain Tablet
Medium Pain	1 Extra Strength Tylenol Tablets	1 Prescription Pain Tablet
Intense Pain	No Extra Strength Tablet	2 Prescription Pain Tablets

This will allow you to deal with three different levels of pain relief. Remember, as you increase the amount of prescription pain tablet usage, your pain will decrease, but side effects such as nausea and constipation will be more common.

**How should you expect to feel after surgery:** In general, while aches and discomforts are normal following facial surgery. Escalating severe pain is not typical. If you experience this type of escalating pain, contact Dr. Rodrigues' office.

**Diet:** There are no diet restrictions after surgery, but minimize chewing as this can increase swelling.

**Activity:** Following elective facial surgery no strenuous activity should be preformed during the first week, but do not lie flat for extensive periods. Lying completely still in bed for hours following surgery can put you at risk for blood clot formation in the veins of your legs, which can lead to a serious problem. To avoid this, you are encouraged to engage in frequent but light mobility when you arrive home. Take small walks around your home (to the kitchen, for example, to get water). Frequent light mobility is necessary to maintain good circulation. When resting in bed, elevate your head above the level of your heart. You may prop your head up with pillows or rest in a reclining chair for the first day or so after surgery. Limit movement of your head, neck, and facial muscles to promote good healing. Unnecessary activity may cause swelling, bruising and discomfort.

**Exercise:** Dr. Rodrigues will give you specific orders regarding your surgery and when you can return to exercising. In general, for the first week following surgery, no strenuous exercise should be attempted at all. Based on the type of surgery you had, the first week you may begin to resume light physical activity. For example, on the eighth day following surgery, you could do light activity, but only at about 10% of your normal capacity. On the ninth day, do 20% of your normal capacity. Increase this rate so that by the fourteenth day following surgery you have returned to full capacity. When in doubt, always consult Dr. Rodrigues. It's better to err on the side of caution rather than to overexert yourself and have a problem with your surgical recovery.

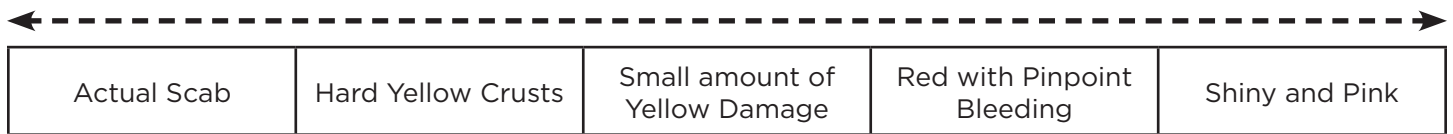
**Prepare for frequent follow-up appointments:** Dr. Rodrigues will see you frequently after your procedure. Plan to make several office visits. These will be determined by Dr. Rodrigues, but typically occur at 1-2 days, 3-4 days, 1 week, 3-4 weeks and 3 months after the procedure. Additional visits will be determined by you and Dr. Rodrigues.

**Caring for your lasered skin:** The resurfaced area will feel swollen and numb and look slightly pink. It is normal to have significant swelling the night and morning after the procedure. This can be minimized by sleeping with your head elevated.

**Day 1-2:** You may awaken with an adhesive dressing placed over the areas that were lasered. This dressing will usually stay in place until Dr. Rodrigues sees you on your first postoperative visit. Should the dressing become loose before our appointment, try to reattach the dressing over the lasered skin using a piece of first aid tape. If the dressing will not stay in place, cover the exposed areas of skin with a liberal amount of the ointment provided. So long as the lasered skin is not directly exposed to air, you should not feel much discomfort.

**Day 3-7:** Keep the skin CLEAN and MOIST at all times using the recommended emollients.

Lasered skin can have a spectrum of different appearances:



Your main job for the first 7-10 days is to keep the skin in either the red or pink state. Yellow drainage and crusts must be prevented with frequent thorough cleaning! To care for your wound, you will need to prepare: white vinegar mixed into water. Boil 2 cups of water and allow it to cool to room temperature. Add 1 oz. of white vinegar. Keep the solution in the refrigerator, as this will provide comfort during cleaning. Cleanse the face liberally with gauze soaked in this liquid every 3-6 hours during awake hours. Gently pat the skin dry with a clean gauze or washcloth, then apply a liberal layer of ointment prescribed by Dr. Rodrigues (Aquaphor, Cetaphil or Crisco).

For the next 1-3 days after the dressing is removed, the skin will leak a straw colored fluid. During this time, you will find your face needing to be cleaned every 3 hours, decreasing to every 6 hours by the end of the first week. Avoid strenuous activity and sweating during the first week.

Do not allow yellow crusts or scabs to form on raw parts of the skin. This can be prevented by keeping the skin very moist with the provided emollients. Scabs and crusting can be removed by gently rubbing a Q-tip with hydrogen peroxide over the area or using the vinegar and water mixture with a washcloth to gently brush them off. It is normal to see a little bit of bleeding once the scab or crust has been broken away. Do not become alarmed. Maintain a generous layer of ointment over the raw area to promote optimum skin healing. Refrigerating the ointment will increase its soothing effect.

**Day 8-14:** During this time your skin will look like you have a bad sunburn. Wean off the thicker emollients, and begin to use normal facial moisturizers. Dr. Rodrigues will help you decide when to make this transition. This often occurs around day 10.

**Use of make-up and cover-up:** Dr. Rodrigues will let you know when it is okay to wear makeup. This is usually 10-14 days after your laser procedure. A foundation with a slight green tint will most effectively neutralize the pinkness of your skin. Many patients have found it helpful to go to a department store makeup counter and seek advice from an experienced cosmetic salesperson.

**Day 15+:** It may take up to 3 months for the redness to completely disappear. You may now resume your normal activities with the exception of any sun exposure. It is of utmost importance to wear sunscreen and strictly avoid the sun. Damage of UV rays can occur in winter through car windows and even on cloudy days. For the best possible result, SPF 30 sun block should be used daily for 6 months.

*Please Note: These instructions are to be followed as a general guideline. Dr. Rodrigues will discuss with you the exact instructions he wishes you to follow after your individual surgery. If you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification of instructions, please feel free to call our office.*