

Pulsed Dye Laser Treatment

What is Pulsed Dye Laser?

Pulsed dye laser is used to treat abnormal blood vessels under the skin. The laser creates a light that passes through the top layer of the skin. It heats and destroys the abnormal blood vessels.

How is a laser treatment done?

Every one in the treatment room has to wear special glasses. The glasses protect their eyes from the bright light. A special cloth may be used to cover the eyes of the person having the treatment.

The doctor holds a wand that sends the laser light to the skin. The light is about the same size and shape as the end of a pencil eraser. As the light touches the skin it may feel like the snap of a rubber band.



For a short time after the treatment the skin may itch or feel sunburned. The treated area will look gray-purple in color, like a bruise. This is normal. The color will fade over the next 7 to 14 days. There may be some mild swelling for a day or two after the treatment. It will take 6 to 8 weeks for the full effect of the treatment to be seen. The number and length of treatments will depend on the size, type and location of the area being treated.

How to prepare for a laser treatment

The skin can **not** be tanned for at least 2 months before each treatment and 2 months after each treatment. Laser does not work as well on skin that is tan or has a dark pigment.

What care is needed after a treatment?

- Put an ice pack on for 20 minutes immediately after treatment. Ice the area on and off for the first day if there is swelling or pain.
- Put Vaseline® ointment on the treated area 2 to 3 times a day. Do this for 7 to 10 days. This will keep the skin healthy.
- If there are any blisters or crusting, use Polysporin® or another double antibiotic ointment instead of Vaseline®. Contact the dermatology office.
- Gently wash the treated area when taking a shower or bath. Mild soap and water may be used. Gently pat the area dry and put on more ointment.
- Make-up can be used on the area starting 48 hours after the treatment. Make-up must be put on and taken off very gently to avoid damage to the treated skin.

Home care (continued)

- Do not rub, scratch, or put any pressure on the treated area until the bruising and crusting are gone.
- Keep the treated area uncovered unless the doctor or nurse tells you otherwise.
- Do not remove crusted skin from the treated area.
- Wear loose clothes over the treated area. Friction or rubbing from tight clothes may cause scarring.
- Give Tylenol® for mild pain.
- No rough play or heavy physical activity for at least one week after the treatment.

What are the possible side effects?

- Bruising, swelling, pain, and temporary skin color change.
- Rare side effects:
 - Blistering. This can sometimes cause texture changes or scarring of the skin.
 - Permanent skin color change. It may be lighter or darker than the skin around the treated area.

What follow-up care is needed?

- Protect the treated area with a sunscreen with SPF #15 or higher. Tanned skin will block the laser light from reaching the blood vessels. The sun can increase the chance of having the skin become discolored and scarred.
- The doctor will check the treated skin and talk with you about more treatments if needed.

ALERT: Call your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if the person that was treated has:

- Signs or symptoms of infection. This may include:
 - Fever that is not from another illness.
 - A lot of swelling.
 - Blisters.
 - Crusting of the skin.
 - Drainage.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.