

Laser Hair Removal: Patient Information

For patients seeking to remove unwanted body hair, the medical professionals at Eccles Clinic offer laser assisted hair removal as an effective method for delaying, but not always totally eliminating, hair growth.

Laser treatment involves the passing of a gentle beam of light through the upper layers of skin, targeting the melanin in the hair root without causing any significant damage to the surrounding tissue. Once treated, hair can take seven to fourteen days to fall out and may appear to be growing during that period.

The darker the hair, the more effective the result. Patients are advised that blond, red, grey or white hair will not respond to laser treatment.

The facts about Laser Hair Removal:

- Shaving does not make hair grow back faster, darker or thicker.
- The thickness and colour of skin, and the colour of the hair to be removed, will determine which lasers can be used and how successful treatment may be.
- Wait two months after waxing before any laser treatment to remove hair.
- Most people need anywhere from three to six treatments for substantial long-term hair reduction.

Q: How do I prepare for hair removal?

A: As the hair shaft is the treatment target, it is important to stop all waxing, sugaring or plucking, or using hair minimising creams/deodorants for approximately eight weeks prior to your laser treatment. Removing the hair shafts prior to treatment means there will be no target for the laser.

Q: What happens during the procedure?

A: Depending on the area of the body to be treated, the procedure may take anywhere from several minutes to one hour. In most cases, no anaesthesia is necessary. During the treatment, a focused laser beam passes through the skin and is absorbed by the pigment in the hair follicle. A percentage of the follicles are instantaneously and permanently disabled with each treatment.

Q: What does the laser treatment feel like?

A: The sensation produced by the laser has been likened to that of elastic band snapping against the skin. Certain skin areas may be particularly sensitive (such as the upper lip), and you may desire the use of a topical anaesthetic cream. During treatment a method of cooling the skin is employed to minimise discomfort.

Q: How many treatments are required and how often?

A: Because hair grows in cycles, a minimum of three laser treatments is required. Hair regrowth can occur more quickly in areas known to produce hair rapidly (e.g. chin and upper lip). After laser treatment, patients usually report hair regrowth is slower, finer in texture, and sparser. All patients require at least two to three treatments at monthly intervals before results and benefits can be assessed.

The number of treatments required depends on skin type, hair colouring and coarseness of the hair. If, following the initial six treatments, the outcome is not satisfactory you will meet with your consultant and review your treatment plan.

Q: What happens after the procedure?

A: You may experience mild sunburn like sensation which may be accompanied by minor swelling. This usually lasts for approximately 2 -24 hours and can be soothed with a cold gel pack or ice pack. The treated hair will continue to appear for 7 - 30 days after your treatment: please note this hair is being expelled from the skin.



Q: How can I be sure laser treatment is safe?

A: Lasers have been safely used in medicine for over 30 years. Our clinical staff are all trained to the highest standard and regularly update their clinical knowledge and skills.

Q: Are there any possible complications?

A: As with all procedures, some risks are involved in laser therapy. Typical side-effects of treatment include redness and some swelling which usually subsides after a few days. See below for a more detailed list of risks and complications.

Risks & Discomforts:

Blisters or Scabs: While rare, these can develop within the first three days, and can take one to two weeks to heal.

Folliculitis: Also called ingrown hairs, result from incomplete hair removal, present as a rash or small spots around the hair follicle.

Skin Darkening (*hyper-pigmentation*): Occasionally brown/grey darkened areas may occur at the site of laser treated areas, particularly if unprotected skin is exposed to sunlight. While more common in patients with olive or dark skin tones, the reaction can worsen with continued unprotected sun exposure. Eccles Clinic recommends sun block is used for six weeks after the completion of laser treatment.

Skin Lightening (*hypo-pigmentation*): Light spots can occur in an area of skin that has received several treatments. These pale areas usually darken or repigment in three to six months, but in rare cases could be permanent, leading to a loss of tanning ability in the treated areas. Eccles Clinic recommends sun block is used for six weeks after the completion of laser treatment.

Scarring: As an extremely rare reaction after vascular-specific laser therapy, scarring could occur following disruption of the skin's surface.

New hair growth: In very rare cases has been noted in or at the edge of the area treated. This growth usually responds to continued treatment.

Allergic reaction: If local anaesthetic or antibiotics are used there is a risk of an allergic reaction.

Activation of Skin infection: Pimples or pustules may develop within the first few days following treatment. The affected areas should be kept clean and treated with care. If there are any signs of infection (i.e. oozing, pus, persistent redness or swelling) contact the clinic immediately.

For more details on laser treatment, contact Eccles Clinic on 01-8302169