

# Photorejuvenation with Intense Pulsed Light

Krauss Dermatology, Wellesley, MA

## **1. What is photorejuvenation?**

Photorejuvenation uses light energy to improve and eradicate brown spots caused by the sun and aging, broken blood vessels and blotchy redness. This “Photofacial” also improves texture by stimulating collagen production in the skin. This makes pores appear smaller, and makes fine lines less noticeable. It works best in fair skinned patients. Generally 3-5 treatments spaced about 3 weeks apart are necessary to achieve the best results.

## **2. How is the procedure performed?**

Light of multiple wavelengths passes through a rectangular crystal into the skin. The entire face is treated in one 10 minute session. The neck, chest, arms and back of the hands may also be treated very safely and effectively.

## **3. Is photorejuvenation painful?**

There is a slight stinging sensation with each pulse of light. A topical numbing cream may decrease discomfort. Topicalaine, a very effective anesthetic gel, may be purchased in our office. Alternatively, LMX 4 or 5% cream (which is slightly more expensive than Topicalaine) may be ordered from your pharmacy without a prescription. Apply a generous amount of Topicalaine or LMX 30 minutes before your appointment and rub into the skin. Repeat this application after you check in for your appointment.

## **4. Are there any risks or side effects of treatment?**

Slight redness and temporary darkening of freckles and brown spots after each treatment are expected. Occasionally slight swelling occurs under the eyes. More serious side effects are rare, but most can be avoided by proper sun avoidance before and after the procedure. Possible adverse effects include discoloration (lightening or darkening), prolonged redness, bruising, significant swelling or extremely rarely blistering or scarring. During the intense pulsed light treatment, shields are worn to protect the eyes.

## **5. What do I need to do to maintain my results?**

The best way to maintain results is to protect the skin from the sun. Rosacea patients may need to use topical or oral medicines to prevent blood vessels from returning. One or two intense pulsed light photofacials per year are helpful in some patients to keep brown spots, blood vessels and fine lines at bay.

# ***Patient Instructions for Photorejuvenation***

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## **Pre-Photofacial Instructions:**

1. It is imperative to protect the treated skin from the sun for a full 4 weeks prior to photorejuvenation. This is best accomplished by the use of spf 30 sunscreen daily (preferably containing titanium dioxide or zinc oxide) and a hat worn during times of greater exposure to the sun's rays. Any tan or "color" from the sun can cause side effects.
2. Artificial tanners must be stopped 3 weeks before treatment.
3. A topical numbing cream may further decrease discomfort. Topicaine, a very effective anesthetic gel, may be purchased in our office. Alternatively, LMX 4 or 5% cream (which is slightly more expensive than Topicaine) may be ordered from your pharmacy without a prescription. Apply a generous amount of Topicaine or LMX 30 minutes before your appointment and rub into the skin. Repeat this application after you check in for your appointment. **No more than a single 30 gram tube should be used in any given day to avoid the danger of lidocaine toxicity.**
4. Discontinue aspirin for 10 days prior to an IPL treatment. Discontinue ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and Vitamin E capsules 5 days prior to the procedure. Using aspirin or ibuprofen during the week before treatment may lead to increased redness or bruising and failure for redness and capillaries to resolve with treatment.

## **Post-Photofacial Instructions:**

1. Sun protection including spf 30 sunscreen, and preferably a hat, are mandatory for at least 4 weeks after each treatment. To maintain your excellent results, these sun protective measures should continue indefinitely.
2. Make-up may be put on gently immediately after the procedure.
3. Scrubs and facials should be avoided for 5 days, but then can be used gingerly to help remove the dissolving brown age spots that appear to be flaking off the skin.
4. Glycolic, retinol, Retin A and Renova creams may be restarted after 2 days.