

Smoothbeam® Laser for Acne, Acne Scarring and Fine Lines

Krauss Dermatology
781-416-3500

1. What types of lesions can be treated with Smoothbeam?

The Smoothbeam laser has been FDA approved for treating active acne, acne scars and fine lines. Studies have shown over 90% improvement after 3-4 treatments for acne. Recent followup has shown that results last at least 18 months. Acne scars, one of the most challenging problems in dermatology, also improve an average of 50-60% with long lasting results after a series of treatments. Fine lines of the eye area, upper lip and cheeks have shown significant improvement with this laser. Flesh colored bumps called sebaceous hyperplasia can also be improved with the Smoothbeam.

2. How does the laser work?

The 1450 nanometer wavelength of the Smoothbeam targets the sebaceous gland, the root of acne. It damages the gland in a safe and long lasting way to stop it from overproducing acne-causing sebum. In this manner, it has similar action to the oral medication Accutane® without the systemic side effects. The laser also targets water in the dermis layer of the skin, stimulating production of new collagen to improve the appearance of acne scars and wrinkles. The surface of the skin is protected by a dynamic cooling device. This allows effectiveness without any disruption of the epidermis, minimizing the risk of peeling, wound or scar formation, pain or downtime.

3. Does treatment hurt?

Each pulse of light feels like the snapping of a small rubber band, while a cool spray accompanying the laser pulse (cryogen) minimizes this brief discomfort. New techniques now allow us to treat patients very effectively and comfortably. A topical numbing cream may further 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. What does the skin look like after treatment?

Each pulse of light treats approximately the size of a pencil eraser. These spots may turn pink to slightly red. There may be slight swelling under the eyes after the treatment. Cover makeup can generally be used after 24 hours.

5. What are the risks?

Complications of treatment with the Smoothbeam laser are uncommon. Dark discoloration (hyperpigmentation) of the treated area is unlikely to occur and would fade over months; however, it is important to avoid sun exposure after treatment to minimize this risk. Light discoloration (hypopigmentation), bruising and scarring are extremely rare. It is important to follow preprocedure instructions in order to minimize these risks. Laser light cannot penetrate deeper than the skin and will not harm internal organs, but goggles must be worn to protect the eyes. Improvement requires a series of treatments with some patients responding more quickly than others. As with any laser, there may be some patients who do not improve as expected despite adequate treatment.

Patient Instructions for Smoothbeam Laser Treatment

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Pre-Treatment Instructions

1. Avoid sun exposure or tanning for one month prior to treatment. Tanned skin can increase the chance of discoloration.
2. To prevent bruising, avoid taking aspirin for 10 days prior to the procedure. Do not take ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or related products like Aleve, Naprosyn) for 5 days prior to the procedure. Avoid alcoholic beverages for 2 days prior. You may take Tylenol, which will not affect your laser results.
3. Do not scrub or traumatize the skin to be treated. Do not use Retin A, Renova, Tazorac or glycolic acid products for 3 days before treatment.
4. A topical numbing cream will decrease discomfort from the procedure. 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. Do not use more than a 30 gram tube of Topicalaine or LMX in a single day.

Post-Treatment Instructions

1. The treated area may be slightly red, with mild soreness like a sunburn for a few hours to two days. These symptoms, if they occur, can be relieved using soft ice packs and Tylenol. If a large facial area has been treated, you may experience swelling. If this occurs, keep your head elevated, and prop it up on several pillows at night.
2. Make-up may be applied *very gently* starting the day after treatment. Use equal care in removing the make-up to avoid trauma to the skin.
3. Cleanse the treated area gently with a mild cleanser (such as Cetaphil), and apply a mild moisturizer. Vaseline jelly or Aquaphor ointment once or twice a day if any areas appear crusted or peeling. Use moisturizer with sunscreen when going outdoors. Do not, under any circumstances, pick or rub the treated areas even if a scab forms (which is very rare).
4. Strictly avoid sun exposure for at least a month after treatment to minimize the risk of dark discoloration in the treated skin. Use sunscreen of spf 30 or higher, preferably containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide daily, and a hat during intense or prolonged sun exposure.
5. Call our office if you are experiencing any crusting, scabbing or pain.