



How does the fractional CO2 laser work?

The fractional CO2 laser takes the CO2 laser beam and fractionates, or pixelates that beam into thousands of tiny little shafts of light. These tiny shafts of light penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin. The skin then repairs those tiny shafts by pushing out the old sun damaged skin and replacing it with new skin. The “collateral” heat damage also helps to shrink existing collagen.

Can I do the fractional CO2 laser with other cosmetic treatments?

Not the same day generally. The CO2 laser is compatible long term with Botox, Juvederm, Restylane, Sculptra and other laser based technologies like hair removal, IPL, pulsed dye, etc.

How long do the effects of a fractional CO2 resurfacing laser treatment last?

That depends on how well you protect your skin from the sun and other factors that cause aging like your general health, smoking, changes in weight, etc. If you apply sunscreen and wear brimmed hats, you can maintain the good effects of your CO2 laser treatment for several years.

How long does the fractional CO2 laser take to work? When will I see results?

Bear in mind that the fractional CO2 laser can be customized. Treatments can be deeper, with more healing and downtime, or shallower, with less healing time. The deeper the treatment, the better the results generally. But some patients prefer to have two treatments that aren't as deep so they can avoid a lot of downtime.

You will see some immediate results but you won't see the full results for 3-6 months. After your skin heals, which may take up to 3-14 days; there will be a period of 4 to 6 weeks after that when your skin might be slightly pink. During this period, your skin will feel smoother and looks less blotchy. As the color returns to normal, you will see fewer lines, less blotchiness, and more glow.

How much do fractional CO2 laser treatments cost?

Full face treatment is \$1500.00. Generally, up to 2 areas at a time can be treated. For example, face and neck or neck and chest, would have different prices. More areas at the same visit are not advised due to the potential toxicity of the numbing cream used prior to the treatment.

How are fractional CO2 laser treatments performed?

This is a prototype treatment for our office. Other offices will be different so be sure to ask and not just assume it's the same! You need to arrive 1 ½ hours before your

treatment. You or a technician will cleanse the treatment area and then apply a numbing cream to the area to be treated. We also have our patients take the anti-inflammatory Toradal, which helps to reduce the discomfort. Then you just relax, read, and listen to music, while the numbing cream takes effect.

After you numb for about an hour, the numbing gel will be removed. The treatment takes about an hour for a full face and feels a little like a “pins and needles” sensation. A strong stream of cold air (a Zimmer cooler) is blown on the area during the treatment to make it comfortable. The discomfort ranges from mild to moderate (2-4/10). Plan on being in the office for 2 ½ hours total.

Most people drive to and from their own fractional CO2 laser appointments. Offices vary in this. Some offices will use mild narcotics or anti-anxiety drugs which do require someone else to drive after the treatment.

What will I look like right after the treatment and what is the healing time?

During the first 24 hours after treatment, your skin may feel as though it is sunburned. Ice packs/frozen peas are used 5-10 minutes per hour for the first 5-6 hours after the treatment.

Your skin will peel for 2-7 days and will be pink for 3 to 6 weeks. This healing all depends on how deep your treatment is. After a week or so, you can wear make-up to cover the pink. Rarely, bruising may develop, which can take up to two weeks to resolve. Allow 2-4 weeks for weddings, reunions, family pictures, etc. just to be safe. Allow longer for body sites like arms or legs.

Can I go back to work and activities immediately?

No, you will need to take the rest of that day off to ice and care for the treated area. For the lighter fractional CO2 treatments, you will need 3-5 days of downtime. For the deeper treatments, plan on 7-10 days of healing before you can go out in public.

How many treatments will I need?

The number depends on the extent of your sun damage, scarring or wrinkles, and on how much downtime you can accept. If you can tolerate 7 days of downtime, you would generally need only 1 or 2 fractional CO2 treatment.

Are there any reasons not to be treated with these lasers?

Reasons not to do a fractional laser treatment may include use of medications that increase photosensitivity, use of anticoagulants (some are fine), use of Accutane in the last year (vs. 6 months), chemotherapy, history of difficulty healing or scarring, history of bleeding disorders, and pregnancy.

Are there any medical or cosmetic side effects?

Complications are rare but here is a list of some of the possible complications of fractional CO2 laser treatments:

- Pain. Most people feel very little pain during treatment due to the measures discussed above. Rarely there is mild discomfort for the first day after surgery, but Tylenol is effective for it.
- Redness. A pink color may persist for two weeks to two months after the laser surgery. In rare instances, it may last three to six months. This is more common in patients who have a history of flushing and blushing easily or who already have dilated vessels on the surface of the skin.

- Wound Healing. The CO2 laser causes a superficial wound to the skin that takes approximately 2 to 10 days to heal. The superficial injury of the outer layers of the skin may result in mild to moderate swelling. Crusting is rare but peeling is common. Once the surface is treated, it may be sensitive to the sun for approximately 4-6 weeks.
- Pigment Changes. The treated area may heal with increased or decreased pigmentation. This is rare and occurs most often in darker skin and 2-6 weeks after treatment. Hyperpigmentation usually fades in three to six months, though rarely pigment changes can be permanent.
- Excessive Swelling. Immediately after laser surgery, there will be swelling of the skin. This is a temporary condition and will resolve over three to seven days.
- Scarring. There is a very small chance of scarring. This includes hypertrophic scars or, very rarely, keloid scars. Keloid scars are thick, raised scar formations. To minimize chances of scarring, it is important to follow post-operative instructions carefully. It is important that any prior history of unfavorable healing be reported. Do not pick!
- Eye Exposure. There is also a risk of harmful eye exposure to laser surgery. It is important to keep your eyes closed and have protective eyewear at all times during the laser treatment.
- Depression or emotional difficulties even if the procedure is successful.

Since every patient is an individual, you may not respond exactly the way other patients do. You also may not be completely happy with the effects of treatment.