

The uRepublic Guide to Contour Resurfacing

Laser resurfacing is a safe and effective way to improve your skin. It's an 'incision-less' procedure, using a new generation laser system with precise control. It's an attractive alternative to surgery for lower eyelid wrinkles, 'smoker's lines' and creases around the mouth and treatment of acne scars. It is also a great way to gently remove 'lumps' and 'bumps' on the skin. Contour resurfacing is often combined with Fractional lasers (Profractional/CO2) for full face rejuvenation.

What conditions can be treated with Contour?

Contour is appropriate for skin resurfacing and applications requiring ablation, vapourisation and coagulation of soft tissue which includes: Wrinkles, Epidermal Nevi, Acne Scars, Solar Lentiginos, Seborrhoeic Keratoses, Actinic Keratoses, Syringomas, Xanthelasma, Hypertrophic Scars, and Surgical Scars.

What will the Contour laser do?

Contour removes layers of your skin's surface, which will be replaced by younger, healthier skin. Only Contour has the ability to provide a treatment that is customised to your skin condition. Your wrinkles will soften and become less noticeable, some will disappear, and pigmented lesions will greatly improve. Acne and other types of scars will also significantly improve with this treatment. Localised contour can be used to spot treat any skin lumps and bumps.

What areas can be treated?

All skin areas can be treated. It is very commonly used for wrinkles and lines around the eyes and upperlip. The face responds best to Contour, however lumps and bumps from any part of the body can also be effectively treated.

What will happen during the procedure?

Local anaesthetic in the form of creams and injections will be used. Your eyes will be protected with safety shields or glasses. Sedatives and happy gas can help sedate and minimise discomfort.

Contour's laser beam will be delivered through a computer-controlled device that automatically scans the area of your skin being treated. You may hear a snapping or popping noise as the laser gently removes the outer skin cells.

Your procedure may take between a few minutes to half an hour, depending on the size of the area to be treated and the depth of your peel.

What aftercare will I need?

You will be given some skincare products, antibiotic tablets and instructions on how to use them to minimise your risk of infection and ensure the shortest healing time. The top layer of your skin will re-grow and be able to be covered with make-up in about a week.

Your new skin will be very sensitive to ultra-violet light, so you must avoid sun exposure until fully healed. If you have to go outdoors, you must cover your skin, wear a hat and use a good sunscreen.

How long will it take me to recover?

Your healing time will depend on your actual treatment depth, and you may experience erythema (redness) which may last several weeks. Healing time does vary among individuals. The skin may remain raw for 7–10 days, which is the minimum time you should take off work. After the skin heals, any short-term changes such as redness, may be camouflaged by make-up. Localised lumps and bumps causes little post-treatment discomfort as only a limited area of skin is treated.

What should I expect after treatment?

Initially the treated area will look swollen and raw with oozing, followed by crusting. It will take approximately 7 days to regenerate new skin. Swelling may be present in the treated areas, but this should subside within a couple of days. Depending on the depth and intensity of treatment, some patients may experience itching after the first few days, which is a normal sign of healing. Your skin will have a residual pink or red colour that will resolve over time. Localised treatment of lumps and bumps will have the appearance of a minor graze, limited to the treated area only.

Will it be uncomfortable?

The amount of discomfort varies from patient to patient. There is a range of anaesthetic options to properly manage any discomfort. Pain tablets may be necessary for patients undergoing full-face resurfacing for the first few days after the procedure to help make the recovery more comfortable. Treatment of 'lumps and bumps' or treatment of limited regions do not have much post-operative discomfort.

Is there a risk of infection?

The recommended aftercare procedures will help reduce the risk of infection. You will be given antibiotics to prevent infection and a follow-up visit is necessary to make sure everything is progressing well.

Is the procedure painful?

The procedure is painful without anaesthetic. Local anaesthetic cream and injections are routinely used during the procedure. Sedation can also be provided. Most patients describe the post-procedure feeling as being like a bad sunburn, but this feeling will subside in a few days.

How soon will I see results?

Because your skin will heal over a period of several weeks, you may not see the final results until then. As your skin heals, and as new collagen regenerates and fills in the lines and wrinkles, your results will continue to improve. Results will continue to improve for months. Lumps and bumps will look smooth and flat immediately, with full healing of the skin in 7 days.

What are the unwanted side effects of Contour resurfacing?

Deeper peels will naturally produce more inflammation, oozing and crusting. This can be expected to occur with the deeper Contour resurfacing procedure and is a normal part of the recovery.

Persistent erythema (redness) may develop and can be more difficult to hide for men (without makeup). Excessive redness can be managed with a vascular laser.

Skin infections such as bacterial or viral sores may develop. Individuals with herpes cold sores should take preventative medications to prevent an outbreak.

After the skin regenerates, it may remain red for prolonged periods, especially for those with a tendency to blush/flush.

In patients with olive or darker complexions, there may be an increased risk of uneven darkening of the skin after the procedure. This can be treated with a bleaching cream or pigment reducing lasers. Rarely, the skin may lose pigment and appear whiter.

Other forms of scarring such as keloids and thick scars are uncommon but more likely with deeper resurfacing. Certain areas such as the neck, chest, deltoids and upper back are more likely to develop keloid scarring. Scarring is also more likely if the wound gets infected.

Is Contour resurfacing suitable for everyone?

We do not treat:

- Pregnant or breast-feeding women
- Children under the age of 18 without parental consent
- Any area where current significant skin disease or infections such as cold sores are present
- Patients with (darker) skin types 5–6 are at greater risk of post-treatment pigmentation
- Individuals with a history of keloid scarring
- Anyone with an emotional, mental or medical condition that may impair judgment

Adjuvant (booster) lasers

After Laser resurfacing (including scar repair) the skin will continue to remodel over the next 2–3 months, even after it looks fully healed. It is desirable to help boost collagen remodeling during this period with adjuvant lasers to achieve an even better final outcome. These adjuvant lasers (Pulsed Dye Laser, Nd:YAG Laser) are gentle non-ablative lasers that can improve scar remodeling and the final results. These treatments are well tolerated and do not require any recovery time (ie no downtime). Patients undergoing Levels 6–7 resurfacing (including laser scar repair) can usually benefit from 3 (or more) adjuvant laser sessions at 3-week intervals. The adjuvant laser procedures are usually started 2–3 weeks after the resurfacing procedure, as soon as the skin looks healed. Please check with your doctor what would work best in conjunction with your resurfacing procedure.