



## **Lowe Plastic Surgery (LPS)**

### **Dr. Lowe's Facts about Laser Hair Removal**

#### **Will my hair be fully and permanently removed?**

Laser hair removal can be performed using a variety of techniques that include: plucking, waxing, shaving, electrolysis, or lasers. Laser hair removal involves often expensive technology, and it can be unpredictable and time consuming. Most of the lack of predictability with laser hair removal is related to the patient's hair and skin itself. What is the color of the hair? What is the color of the patient's skin? Was the laser hair removal professionally done? Most discontent with laser hair removal relates to the cost, discomfort, and time associated with laser treatments. Different lasers may be required based on the quality of the patient's hair and the patient's skin type. Dark hair on light skinned patients is usually the easiest hair to treat. The vast majority of laser removal takes 6-10 treatments to remove 70% of the hair temporarily. The laser focuses on thermal disruption of the tattoo dye treated multiple times. Many patients do not have the patience or finances to fully complete laser hair removal and then maintain its results.

#### **How effective are over-the-counter remedies?**

No over the counter remedies are completely effective at removing hair. Medically prescribed topical skin regimens are helpful but usually only inhibitory. Many patients attempt to treat unwanted body or facial hair on their own, but very few patients see any noticeable long term improvement without more aggressive regimens. Patients are often best served to save their money for professional treatment of hair removal at a spa or laser. Most topical skin programs include a Vaniqua which may decrease hair growth by 50%. Almost no over-the-counter treatment can provide effective dosing without a physician prescription or supervision. Your physician or health care professional can help you develop a legitimate treatment that is right for you.

#### **What do you think about waxing, electrolysis, or dermabrasion?**

Minimally invasive procedures are often associated with predictable results. These procedures are best performed at a spa and are usually quite safe when performed by a professional. Most patients report success with treatment, and the risk include pain, inflammation, and scarring. It is difficult to know how many minimal laser treatments will be required to have equivalent results to these treatments. Patients get exactly what they pay for with these devices in most cases. Dr. Lowe is committed to a clinically effective laser hair removal and leaves the other remedies to the medical spas and aestheticians.

#### **What is the best laser for Hair removal?**

There are a number of lasers that are popular in laser hair removal. The most popular device is the GentleLase (Alexandrite) laser at a wavelength of 755. The laser can target dark hair most effectively. Light or blonde hair may require a special laser to be effective or topical dye treatments. The Harmony at a wavelength of 650 can also be used for hair removal with limited success. Laser hair removal is associated with limited discomfort and recovery. Some patients require local anesthetic and pain medication before or after treatment. No laser hair removal is effective with only one treatment. The cost of laser hair removal usually depends on the device utilized. The newer and more effective treatment costs more, and cheaper is rarely better of course.

#### **Are there substantial risks related to laser hair removal?**

All laser procedures are associated with a certain amount of risk. The risks are often associated with a patient's skin color or consistency. Darker skin types are at a higher risk of scarring and hypopigmentation (white spots). All laser procedures must be adjusted and formulated appropriately for skin types. The risk of laser hair removal include: poor aesthetic results, bruising, swelling, crusting, hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation, virus activation, and scarring. The greater the number of passes with the laser the higher the risks. The more aggressive the laser used, the better the results in most cases. Laser hair removal is always a balance between "pain & gain." Your board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist can assist you with choosing the treatment that is right for you.

**Is laser hair removal painful or time consuming?**

Laser hair removal is usually performed in the office with topical numbing cream. A limited number of patients require sedation in advance with a medication by mouth. The skin surface is treated quickly with small burst of intense laser light. A complete treatment usually requires 5 minutes per area to complete. Icing the area before and after the procedure may be required. Most patients find the treatment to be uncomfortable but more tolerable than waxing or electrolysis. Patient should expect to experience red, peeling, crusting skin for 4-6 days in most cases, but results can vary with skin type. Most patients undergo 6-8 treatments at one to two month intervals with yearly maintenance to maximize the results.

**How much improvement can I expect with each laser treatment?**

Laser hair removal requires multiple treatments over the course of several months. It is one of the best options for hair removal because it can usually be worked into a person's busy schedule. It is not a treatment that will reap results right away or permanently. Most patients undergoing treatment look much like they have a minor sun-burn. Even with this recovery, patients should only expect about a 10 percent improvement in hair reduction. Laser hair removal will in no way provide instant results regardless of what anyone may claim or advertise. Nevertheless, it will in most cases slowly improve hair density. The manufacture recommends multiple treatments spaced out over time forever.

**How much does laser hair removal cost?**

Laser hair removal involves complex laser technology. There are a variety of laser manufacturers that sell these devices. The cost to purchase a fully functional current laser device is about 80-100K. Dr. Lowe usually leases the lasers in his practice. This ensures in most cases that the lasers are properly maintained, a laser technician is on site, and that patients have access to current technology. In most cases, approximately half the laser fee goes to pay for the laser lease and the other is profit. The cost of laser hair removal is determined by time, location, and complexity of treatment. The practice will be able to provide you with the cost of laser treatment after your professional consultation.

**When do you offer laser hair removal procedures?**

All patients considering laser treatment are required to see Dr. Lowe in consultation prior to the laser treatment. Some patient may not schedule a laser treatment for several weeks after consultation depending on their schedule or time of year. Our practice provides laser procedures at set time points throughout the calendar month. We usually perform laser treatments on Wednesday mornings every 2-3 weeks depending on demand. We will often open extra laser treatment days as demand increases. Patients may check with our office for the laser dates that are currently available. Some patients with dark skin or light hair more resistant to treatment will require special laser arrangements.

**Can laser hair removal be combined with other surgical or nonsurgical procedures?**

Laser hair removal is routinely combined with other cosmetic treatments. Additional laser treatments such as Intense Pulse Light (IPL) or resurfacing can be used on occasion to improve the results. Other lasers such as the V-Beam (PDL) can often be added to limited areas without substantial additional risk. Most laser hair treatments require are quite quick; and, therefore allow for other treatment options. Some patients undergo BOTOX application on the same day as laser treatment when scheduled in advance. However, more lengthy cosmetic procedures such as injectable fillers (i.e. Juvederm) usually cannot be performed on the same day due to time limitations or safety concerns. Laser treatments must be performed efficiently and properly on laser days to ensure the most cost effective and safe patient care. Patients who are interested in doing more than one cosmetic treatment on the day of laser are encouraged to check with our office in advance.

### **What is the downtime related to laser hair removal?**

In our practice, Laser hair removal is performed by the physician or his assistant. Dr. Lowe is committed to providing patients with an effective and safe laser treatment. The downtime associated with the typical treatment is 2-4 days or longer. The patients usually return to work the same day or the day after as long as they are aware that some treatment areas may be obvious. Most patients are comfortable in public places after 24 hours with full healing taking up to a month in most cases. Every patient has different skin and different expectations or definitions about down-time. Patients should undergo laser hair removal at least 2 weeks prior to a major event such as a wedding or anniversary. A patient may elect to have a more or less aggressive treatment based on their clinical or social situation. Dr. Lowe and our staff can provide you with further information about downtime and recovery during your laser consultation.

### **Is laser hair removal right for me?**

In most cases, laser hair removal is not something that a patient needs; it is something a patient wants. There is a financial and personal cost for patients who desire hair removal. There are a variety of options to treat unwanted hair. These include waxing, shaving, surgery, and laser treatments to name just a few. Laser hair removal will provide modest results at a limited cost over time. The treatment regimen is not associated with undue risk in most cases. Most patients undergo more than 5 treatments at a time in our practice which is a testament to its effectiveness. No cosmetic procedure is without risk or cost, but laser hair removal is popular because it seems to be the best option in most cases. Patients should carefully weigh the pros and cons of laser hair removal before scheduling the procedure. Each patient is unique, a consultation with a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon or Dermatologist can help you determine what options best suite your situation and pocket book. Laser hair removal is often the right thing for the right person. For further information check out our website or other helpful links at [www.drjlowe.com](http://www.drjlowe.com)

### **What are Dr. Lowe's take home points?**

1. The success of laser hair removal depends on the most on the color of the hair or skin.
2. Understand risks (poor results, bruising, crusting, swelling, burning, and scaring).
3. Laser hair removal is requires 6-10 treatments in most cases.
4. Laser treatment can be adjusted to increase or decrease recovery and results.
5. Laser hair removal is not permanent. It is not!
6. The more aggressive the treatment the quicker the results.
7. Most patients tolerate laser hair removal with topical numbing cream.
8. Multiple passes performed on the same day improve the results for most patients.
9. Patients may experience a superficial burn that will require several days or longer to fully heal.
10. The quality of the laser and safety matters when undergoing any laser hair treatment.