



Lowe Plastic Surgery (LPS) **Dr. Lowe's Facts about Laser V-Beam Treatment (PDL)**

Will my red spots be fully removed?

Removal of red spots can be performed using a variety of techniques that include: surgery, electro-cautery, Intense Pule Light, or Pulse Dye laser. V-beam or Pulse Dye Laser treatments involve expensive technology, and it can be uncomfortable and cause substantial bruising. The laser is highly predictable when used by a professional and is highly effective at treating and removing red. It is approved for redness of the face & neck, rosacea, sun & age spots, small veins, freckles, and scars & stretch marks. This laser requires a cooling unit to protect the skin during application. Most discontent with V-beam is the dark bruise after treatment, cost, and discomfort. There are a number of lasers that can improve red, but none as effectively as the V-beam. The vast majority of patients require 1-2 treatments with yearly maintenance. The laser does not cure disease like rosacea so patients require intermittent treatments. The laser focuses on thermal disruption of anything red near or under the surface the skin. .

How effective are over-the-counter or topical remedies?

No over the counter remedies are very effective at removing red spots that have been present for some time. Medically prescribed topical skin regimens are usually ineffective as well. Many patients attempt to treat red spots on their own, but very few patients see any noticeable improvement. Patients are best served to save their money for professional laser treatment. Most topical skin programs include a skin lightener (Hydroquinone) which may lighten skin spots by 5-10%. 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 micro-peels, micro-dermabrasion, or dermabrasion?

Minimally invasive procedures are associated with minimal results. These procedures are best performed at a spa and are usually quite safe when performed by a professional. Most patients report small improvements in the skin color at best. It is difficult to know how many minimal treatments it would take to equal a standard V-beam laser treatment. Dermabrasion can be effective for texture problems but rarely improves skin color. Dr. Lowe is committed to a true clinically effective treatment such as V-beam laser, and leaves the feel good treatments to the medical spas and aestheticians.

What is the best laser for red spot removal?

There are a number of lasers that are popular to treat background red in the skin. The most popular devices are the IPL which may requires 5 treatments or more to treat what a V-beam laser can improve in one application. The ND:Yag laser can be used for deeper vessels of the leg but is painful and often leaves residual brown spots. The laser can target red most effectively is the V-Beam laser. The treatment is associated with mild discomfort and recovery. Some patients require local anesthetic and pain medication before or after large area treatment. No laser is effective with only one treatment, but the V-beam improves most red spots by 50-70%. The cost of V-beam laser usually decreases as the area fades and required less laser pulses.

Are there substantial risks related to V-Beam laser?

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 include: poor aesthetic results, bruising, swelling, crusting, hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation, virus activation, and scarring. The deeper the laser treatment, the higher the risk. The deeper and more aggressive the laser treatment, the more effective the results in most cases. V-beam laser treatment 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 V-beam laser painful or time consuming?

V-beam laser tattoo 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 cooling spray followed by a small burst of intense laser light. A complete treatment usually requires 5-10 minutes per area to complete. Icing the area before and after the procedure is rarely required. Most patients find the treatment to be uncomfortable but tolerable even with 1-2 passes over the skin. Patient should expect to experience red, bruised, and peeling skin for 7-10 days in most cases, but results can vary with skin type. Most patients undergo 1-2 treatments at one to two month intervals until red spot or area is improved or resolved.

How much improvement can I expect with each laser treatment?

V-beam laser requires 1-2 treatments for most red spots with yearly maintenance in some cases. Birth marks are a notable exception requiring 10-15 treatments over the course of one year with no more than 70-80% improvement in most cases. It is one of the best options for anything red on the skin surface because it can usually be worked into a person's busy schedule. It is not a treatment that will go unnoticed by friends and co-workers for the week. People will know that you had a treatment in any exposed area that leaves small circular dark bruises. Patients should expect about a 50-80 percent improvement in most red color and quality. V-beam will in no way provide instant results regardless of what anyone may claim or advertise. Nevertheless, it will in most cases substantially improve most redness of the skin. The manufacture recommends up to 2-3 treatment spaced over one to two months for the best results.

How much does V-beam laser cost?

Pulse dye lasers or V-beam involve complex and expensive laser technology. There are a variety of laser manufacturers that sell these devices, but V-beam is the industry leader. The cost to purchase a fully functional 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 V-beam laser is determined by time, location, and complexity of treatment. The practice will be able to provide you with the cost of tattoo laser treatment after your professional consultation.

When do you offer V-beam laser treatments?

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. Patients with certain conditions require special laser arrangements.

Can V-beam laser be combined with other surgical or nonsurgical procedures?

Laser treatments are often 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 ND:Yag can often be added to limited areas without substantial additional risk. Some treatments require aggressive management that limits 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 V-beam laser?

In our practice, V-beam laser is performed by the physician. Dr. Lowe is committed to providing patients with an effective and safe laser treatment. The downtime associated with the typical treatment is 7-10 days or longer. Patients can apply a gentle make-up like Neutrogena or DermaBlend the day after treatment. The patients are often able to return to work the same day or the day after as long as they are aware that the treatment will be obvious in some locations. Most patients are comfortable in public places after several days with full healing taking up to 2 weeks in some cases. Every patient has different skin and different expectations or definitions about down-time. Patients should undergo laser treatment 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 V-beam laser right for me?

In most cases, V-beam or any laser treatment is not something that a patient needs; it is something a patient wants. There is a financial and personal cost for patients who desire treatment. There are a variety of options to treat red spots. These include skin care, steroid injections, dermabrasion, surgery, IPL, and laser treatments to name just a few. V-beam laser will provide noticeable results at a limited cost over a short period of time in most cases. The treatment regimen is not associated with undue risk in most cases. Most patients are highly satisfied with their treatment in our practice which is a testament to its effectiveness. No cosmetic procedure is without risk or cost, but V-beam laser is successful because it seems to be the best option in most cases. Patients should carefully weigh the pros and cons of laser before scheduling the procedure. Each patient skin or red spot 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. V-beam laser is often the right thing for the right person. For further information check out our website or other helpful links at www.drjlowe.com

What are Dr. Lowe's take home points?

1. The success of V-beam depends on the most on the problem, location, and skin color.
2. Understand risks (poor results, bruising, crusting, swelling, scarring, and residual brown spots).
3. V-beam will require 1-2 treatments in most cases.
4. V-beam can be adjusted to increase or decrease recovery and results.
5. Stacking treatments in at 1-2 month intervals is effective for deep red spots or birth marks.
6. The more aggressive the treatment the quicker the red will fade.
7. Most patients tolerate laser V-beam with topical numbing cream.
8. Laser treatment feels like a "rubber-band" hitting the skin.
9. A dark bruise will usually be present for 7-10 days. Make-up can be applied the following day.
10. Physician certification and safety matters when undergoing any laser tattoo treatment.