

Laser Hair Removal Frequently Asked Questions



How many treatments does it take to clear area?

Usually 4-6 treatments

Should I expect to be hair free in the treated area after the series of treatments?

Most patients experience an 80-90% reduction in the amount of hair in a given area after approximately 4-6 treatments. More treatments may be needed to be hair free.

Is laser hair removal permanent?

Laser hair removal has been in use for some time. Stable hair loss has been reported as far back as seven years, and Candela, maker of GentleLASE™ has clearance through the FDA to claim permanence. We say permanent hair “reduction” rather than “removal” since removal denotes 100% elimination.

Why does the hair still appear to be present and growing for 1-3 weeks after treatment?

The laser may not remove the hair at the time of treatment. However, the follicle may be effectively destroyed and the hair shaft will fall out, or be “shed” 1-3 weeks after treatment.

Why doesn't the laser work well on blond, grey, or red hair?

The laser energy interacts with pigment or “melanin” in the hair root, and lighter hair color doesn't have much or any melanin in it. Therefore, no laser energy is absorbed, so the follicle can not be effectively treated.

Why must patients not use any form of epilation for 6 weeks prior to treatment?

The hair root has to be present for the laser to work; if the patient has removed it with waxing, plucking, or electrolysis, there is nothing for the laser energy to interact with.

Why must tanning be avoided for 2-4 weeks before and after treatment?

Sun exposure increases the formation of melanin in the skin. Since the laser energy targets melanin, it increases the potential for hyperpigmentation, (darkening) hypopigmentation, (lightening) or blistering from the treatment.

Why must the treated area be shaved just prior to treatment?

If surface hair is present, it will be singed off, increasing the risk of a burn. It will also cause unpleasant odors, and reduce the effectiveness of treatment.

Why must protective eyewear be worn by everyone in the treatment room?

The GentleLASE is a high powered laser system, and can cause eye injury if proper eyewear is not worn while the laser is used.

Can any area of the body be treated?

Yes, any area can be effectively treated except for areas directly near the eye (eyebrows, eyelashes) due to the potential for injury to the eye.

Does the treatment hurt?

There is a wide range of client response. Some report a mild to moderate stinging or burning sensation. Most patients who have waxed or had electrolysis report that laser hair removal feels less painful than those types of treatments. If the treatment is too uncomfortable, then a topical anesthetic prior to treatment can be used. Most patients have no residual pain within 20-30 minutes after treatment.

What are possible side effects of laser hair removal?

Side effects can include blistering, hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation or scarring. Risks of these side effects are minimized if treatment instructions are closely followed.

How long will the treatment last?

Depending on the area to be done, the treatment could last anywhere from 1-2 minutes, up to approximately 1 hour. Upper lips can take just a few minutes, while larger area like backs or legs can take up to 1 hour.

What will the treated area look like after treatment?

The skin in the treatment area will have some erythema or redness, and the hair follicles will “welt” up, looking like goose bumps on the skin for approximately 1-2 hours. Rarely, this effect can last for a couple days.

How long will it be before I notice re-growth in the treated area?

Depending on the individual, the treatment parameters, and area of the body involved, it may be anywhere from 1-2 months before any re-growth is observed.

What is a “test area”, and why is it performed?

“Test areas” are small areas of the skin that are treated at various laser energy levels prior to treatment. The area is evaluated in order to determine the proper energy necessary for effective laser hair removal.