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Hair removal laser treatment

***Information for
patients and carers***

Dermatology Department

Important – before your treatment

- **Do not bleach, dye, pluck or wax the area to be treated for at least 2 weeks before treatment.**
- **You may trim or shave the area to be treated before attending the clinic, but for your first visit, please leave at least 24 hours' growth so we can see the area clearly.**
- **Tanning reduces the effectiveness of the treatment. Avoid sun or sun bed exposure to the area to be treated. Use a strong sun block if you are exposed to sunlight.**
- **Avoid fake tanning products.**
- **Remove any make up thoroughly before treatment.**

What is this leaflet for?

We have written this leaflet to give you information about what to expect when you come for hair removal laser treatment.

What does the laser do?

The laser uses a concentrated beam of light, which passes through the outer layer of your skin. The light is absorbed by pigment in your hair. This causes a brief rise in temperature in the hair and heat is conducted to the growing part of the hair within your skin called the follicle.

The rise in temperature destroys the growing hair cells within the follicle so that no more hair can be produced.

Hair can only be destroyed when it is in its active growing phase. This means that treatment will have to be repeated over several appointments with a gap of approximately 4 to 6 weeks between each treatment. The hair may not be completely destroyed, but any hair that does grow back is usually lighter and finer.

What is pigment?

The pigment in the hair is called melanin and it gives hair its colour. Melanin is also found in skin.

The laser is not effective on light coloured hair (which does not contain a lot of melanin), because there must be pigment present to absorb the laser beam.

The laser used has been chosen to make sure that maximum damage is done to the hair, while reducing any damage to the skin. One of the ways this is done is by cooling the surface of your skin during your treatment.

How effective is hair removal laser treatment?

We do not claim that laser treatment will result in permanent hair removal. However, we expect that you will notice a significant improvement after completing a course of treatments.

What does the treatment involve?

At your first visit, you will have a consultation and discussion with staff. If the treatment is considered suitable for you, we will ask you to sign a consent form. Signing the forms shows that you agree and understand the treatment.

We will then carry out some “patch tests” (tests on a small area of skin) to see how your skin responds to laser treatment.

The area to be treated will be trimmed using a shaver before your treatment. You may do this yourself before coming to the clinic, but for your first visit, please leave at least 24 hours’ growth so we can see the area clearly.

We will also take photographs which will be kept in your treatment records.

The laser device will be applied to your skin and the surface of your skin cooled.

Where is my treatment carried out?

Your treatment will be in the Laser Suite, Ward 406, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Ward 406 is on Level 5 of the Purple Zone.

How long will my appointments take?

Please allow 45 minutes for your first visit, which includes a discussion about your treatment. Other appointments usually take 30 minutes.

Do I need any special preparation?

You can eat and drink as usual before your treatment. However please:

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- **You may trim or shave the area to be treated before attending the clinic, but for your first visit, please leave at least 24 hours' growth so we can see the area clearly.**
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- **Remove any make up thoroughly before treatment.**

Does the treatment hurt?

Most people say that it is uncomfortable, but not any worse than other forms of hair removal.

Are there any after effects?

Redness and swelling are common after treatment, but these usually settle within 1 to 2 days.

The colour of the skin may change temporarily (either darkening or lightening). **This is rare** and may take a few months to disappear completely.

Scarring is possible if the skin blisters, especially if the area becomes infected. **This is rare.**

What should I do after my treatment?

After each appointment, please look after the treated area carefully until your skin has healed.

Avoid any injury, rubbing or scratching. If a scab forms, let it drop off naturally.

If the area is painful, paracetamol or home-made ice packs can help. If taking paracetamol, always follow the dosage instructions on the bottle or pack.

With ice packs, use them for up to 2 minutes at a time, with a break of 2 minutes in between. Use ice packs for 15 minutes in the morning and for 15 minutes in the evening only.

Avoid using make up on the area until any inflammation has settled.

If the treated area looks like it might be infected (for example if you have increasing swelling, redness or discharge), you may need antibiotics.

The treated area will be very sensitive to sunlight for 8 weeks. Protect the area with sun block if you are out in the sun (even in Scotland).

Contact telephone number

If you have any concerns about your appointment, you can contact us for advice.

Also, please let us know if you can't keep your appointment, as we can then offer your appointment to another patient.

Dermatology Ward

Ward 406

Purple Zone, Level 5

 01224 552871

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

If you have an urgent query outwith these times that can't wait, please contact **NHS24** on **111** for advice.

**This leaflet is also available in large print.
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Ask for leaflet 1307.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.
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please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

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developed by NHS Tayside.