

Laser treatment of the skin: Care at home

What is laser treatment of the skin?

Lasers are concentrated beams of light used for many types of surgery. Lasers are often used to treat hemangiomas, port wine stains, and many types of skin lesions. The laser destroys blood vessels in the skin while leaving the surrounding skin unharmed.

What can I expect after surgery?

Laser-treated areas will turn a blue-grey color during the healing process. There may also be swelling, blisters, or breaks in the skin. Healing takes at least 1 to 2 weeks.

How should I care for my child?

Your child may bathe or shower. Wash and dry the area gently. Do not rub with a washcloth or towel.

Clean the area 2 or 3 times per day for at least the first 2 days after surgery, or until there are no blisters or breaks in the skin:

1. Wash gently with soap and water.
2. Pat dry with a clean, soft towel.
3. Apply antibiotic ointment, such as Bacitracin®.
 - If your child is allergic to antibiotic ointment, you can use petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline®.

If laser surgery was done on the face, swelling may occur, and lasts 2 to 4 days. To reduce swelling, your child should sleep

with the head raised above heart level for 2 or 3 days after surgery.

Do not allow your child to pick at crusted areas. For infants and young children, protect laser-treated areas with bandages or gauze until the blue-grey color goes away.

Follow your Discharge Instruction and Medicine sheets for instructions about diet, activity, pain control, and when to see the surgeon again.

What else do I need to know?

Protect the area with sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) for 6 months after laser treatment. This will prevent sun damage of already treated areas. Also use the sunscreen on areas scheduled for future treatment, because tanning blocks the entry of the laser light into the skin.

When should I call the surgeon?

Call if your child has:

- temperature higher than 101° F (38.4° C).
- increased pain, swelling, warmth, redness, or drainage at the site.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call your surgeon.