

How Do Lasers Remove Unwanted Pigments In The Skin?

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Laser therapy is one of the most exciting treatments for removing unwanted pigments in the skin such as birthmarks, age spots, freckles and tattoos. Lasers work by emitting a specialized light that is passed through the skin and preferentially absorbed by its target, be it an unwanted hair, vein, or in this case, the unwanted pigment (either natural - melanin or tattoo inks) in the skin. The laser causes the pigments to break up and disappear, leaving you with smooth, clear skin. There are several lasers available that work remarkably well in treating unwanted pigmentation.

Which Laser Should I Choose?

Skin Laser & Surgery Specialists of New York & New Jersey are proud to offer a wide variety of laser/light sources to treat unwanted pigmentation and tattoos. This allows us to treat the widest variety of patients and situations. Each option performs best for different types of patients and needs. Our doctors will assess the laser that is best for you.

What Can I Expect With The Procedure?

Most people describe the treatment feeling like a rubber band snap. You may be given a topical anesthetic cream to numb the area to be treated. Any discomfort can be eased with the application of cool compresses. After treatment, you can immediately return to your normal activities.

Will Insurance Cover This Procedure?

Laser treatments of tattoos and pigments, like other cosmetic procedures are not usually covered by your insurance company. If you have any questions, it is best to talk with your provider.

How Many Treatment Sessions Will It Take To Remove The Pigment or Tattoo?

Depending on the type of pigment in your skin, it can be gone in as little as one to two sessions. When dealing with tattoos, the average, professional tattoo requires at least 6-8 treatments, while amateur tattoos require at least 3-4 treatments, all spaced approximately at least 6-8 weeks apart. The number of treatments depends on the amount and type of ink used, and the depth of the ink in the skin.

Do All Colors Of Ink Disappear Equally As Well?

No, dark (blue/black and green) and red inks fade the best. Purple may also respond. Yellow is very difficult to remove, although it may fade somewhat.

Can Unwanted Pigmentation Come Back?

Most unwanted pigmentary problems do not return. However, some birthmarks may recur after several months or years. Treatments can be repeated to achieve the desired results.

Will Tattoos Completely Disappear?

In some cases, yes. Greater than 95% fading of the tattoo may be accomplished. However, it is very important to know that over 100 tattoo inks are in use worldwide today, none of which are regulated by the FDA. Not knowing which tattoo ink, how much was used, or how deep it was placed in the skin makes it impossible for the physician to predict the degree of removal on any given tattoo.

What Type Of Post-Treatment Care Is Necessary?

Occasionally there will be pinpoint bleeding associated with the treatment. An antibacterial ointment and a dressing will be applied to the area. The treated area should be kept clean with continued application of any ointment given to you by your physician. A shower can be taken the next day, although the treated area should not be scrubbed.

How Do I Get Started?

Dr. Goldberg will be happy to discuss this procedure with you. Please feel free to call for a private consultation.

David J. Goldberg, M.D. (<http://www.skinandlasers.com/>) is on faculty and Director of both MOHS Surgery, and Laser Research, Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York; and Director of Skin Laser & Surgery Specialists of New York & New Jersey. He is past President of the American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery. Dr. Goldberg was voted "one of the top ten laser surgeons in the U.S." by Self Magazine and "one of the best doctors in America" by Woodward/White, Inc.