

Laser Hair Removal

Photothermolysis



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®

What is Laser Hair Removal?

Laser hair removal, also known as selective photothermolysis, is a non-invasive technique that uses highly concentrated light to penetrate hair follicles. The intense heat of the laser damages the hair follicle to inhibit future hair growth. Laser hair removal is effective for most parts of the body, including the face, legs, arms, underarms, chest, neck, back, and bikini area.

Benefits of Laser Hair Removal:

- Non-invasive technique that reduces unwanted hair growth
- Quick and virtually painless process
- Provides long-lasting results
- Safe and effective for most skin types
- Minimal risk of side effects

It's important to note that laser hair removal only affects actively growing hair follicles. Therefore, multiple sessions may be necessary to achieve significant hair reduction. In addition, while laser hair removal effectively slows hair growth, it doesn't guarantee permanent hair removal. Periodic maintenance treatments may be required to maintain your results.



Consultation & Preparation

During your consultation be prepared to discuss:

- Your reasons for wanting to have the procedure, your expectations, and your desired outcome
- Your current medications and drug allergies; any vitamins or herbal supplements you take; and any alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or drug use
- Medical conditions, family history, drug allergies, and medical treatments
- Previous surgeries

Your surgeon, or their specialty trained nurse, will also:

- Discuss likely outcomes of laser hair removal and any risks or potential complications
- Discuss your options
- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Recommend a course of treatment
- Take photographs

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Laser hair removal requires no anesthesia and is usually performed in an outpatient setting. More than one treatment session may be required to obtain optimal results.

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's very important to understand all aspects of your laser hair removal procedure. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

The Procedure

What to expect during the procedure:

- You will be asked to wear protective eyewear to shield your eyes from the laser light
- The treatment area will be cleaned and shaved prior to the procedure
- A cooling gel or device may be applied to your skin to minimize discomfort and protect your skin during the procedure
- The laser will be adjusted to match your skin type and hair color, and the provider will determine the appropriate pulse duration and energy level for your treatment
- The laser will be applied to your skin in a series of pulses, targeting hair follicles beneath the surface of the skin
- You may feel a sensation of heat or a mild snapping or stinging feeling during the procedure, but any discomfort should be brief and tolerable
- After the procedure is complete, the treatment area may be cooled or soothed with a cold compress or gel
- You will be given aftercare instructions to follow, which may include avoiding sun exposure and wearing sunscreen on the treated area



Risks & Safety

Laser hair removal doesn't guarantee permanent hair removal. Some hair could be resistant to the laser treatment or grow again after treatment — although the new hair growth might be finer and lighter in color.

Possible side effects of laser hair removal include:

- Mild swelling around the hair follicles
- Pigment changes may occur, especially in those with darker skin. These changes are usually temporary
- Slight redness of the skin
- Temporary irritation resulting in blistering, crusting, scarring, or other changes in skin texture

Special care must be taken for those with darker skin. A less intensive laser should be used to avoid damaging the outer skin.

Anyone who has recently tanned, used a spray tan, or gone to a tanning booth should avoid getting laser hair treatment to avoid possible damage to their skin.

All risks will be fully discussed prior to your consent. It is important that you address all your questions directly with your plastic surgeon.

Cost

The cost of laser hair removal varies depending on several factors such as the location of the clinic, the number of sessions required, the area to be treated, and the expertise of the practitioner.

Generally, the larger the area to be treated, the more sessions required, and the more experienced the practitioner, the higher the cost. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans, so be sure to ask.



Your satisfaction involves more than a fee:

When choosing a plastic surgeon for laser hair removal, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with them are just as important as the final cost of the treatment.

Words to know

- **Laser:** A device that emits a highly concentrated beam of light to target hair follicles.
- **Hair follicle:** A small cavity in the skin from which hair grows.
- **Hair growth cycle:** The process by which hair grows, rests, and sheds over a period of time.
- **Treatment session:** The individual session of laser hair removal treatment.
- **Maintenance treatments:** Periodic laser hair removal treatments recommended to maintain hair reduction results achieved from initial treatments.

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Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

- Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons?
- Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure? If so, at which hospitals?
- Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- How are complications handled?
- What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?
- Do you have before-and-after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

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Make the Right Choice

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a member of the **American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)**.

ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS)[®] or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada[®]
- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

Do not be confused by other official-sounding boards and certifications.

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS-recognized certifying board with “cosmetic surgery” in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.



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