

Laser Resurfacing FAQ

Is itching normal after laser resurfacing?

Yes, itching is a common and expected part of the healing process. It typically occurs 2–5 days post-treatment and is a sign your skin is regenerating. Avoid scratching or picking, as this can increase the risk of scarring or infection.

How long will my skin feel rough or dry?

Rough, sandpaper-like texture is normal for about 5–10 days, depending on the depth of your resurfacing treatment. This phase coincides with the shedding of the top layers of damaged skin.

How long will I stay pink or red?

A slight pink hue of the treated skin may persist for up to 12 weeks, with deeper treatments taking longer to normalize. Everyone heals at a different pace. For many, mild pinkness lasts up to a few months but can be concealed with gentle, non-comedogenic makeup.

Are breakouts or acne flare-ups normal?

Yes, breakouts are possible, especially if you are using occlusive products like Aquaphor or have a history of acne-prone skin. These typically resolve with time and proper skincare. Notify your provider if breakouts worsen or become cystic.

How long do I need to use Aquaphor or an occlusive balm?

You'll need to use Aquaphor or a similar occlusive until:

- The skin is no longer weeping or open (usually about 3–4 days)
- You may start using Lorenol post treatment balm on day 4, so long as you are not experiencing open skin or weeping at this point

Using it too long may clog pores, so follow your provider's exact recommendation.

When can I go in the sun again?

You should strictly avoid sun exposure for at least 4 weeks post-treatment, and ideally limit sun for 3 months. After healing:

- Use broad-spectrum SPF 45+ daily
- Wear hats and sun-protective clothing
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors

When can I take a hot shower or use steam?

Avoid saunas, hot tubs and steam rooms for at least 2 weeks, or until your skin is no longer sensitive. Heat can:

- Prolong redness
- Increase inflammation
- Aggravate post-laser sensitivity
- Use lukewarm water to wash the treated area and gently pat your skin dry.

When will my skin look “normal” again?

This depends on treatment depth:

- Light resurfacing: 7–10 days for recovery, redness fades within 2–4 weeks
- Moderate to deep: Initial recovery within 2 weeks, redness and sensitivity may persist up to 3 months

Mineral based makeup can usually be resumed around 3 days post-treatment — if skin is intact and no longer peeling.

When can I resume using retinol or retinoids?

Wait at least 3–4 weeks, or until:

- Your skin is fully healed
- There is no active redness or flaking

Always reintroduce retinoids slowly—start 1–2 times per week and increase as tolerated.

Is peeling or flaking normal?

Yes. Flaking and peeling begin around days 3–5 and can last several days to a week. Do not manually exfoliate or pick at peeling skin—let it shed naturally to avoid scarring or hyperpigmentation. Vinegar soaks can help to emulsify some of the dead skin and help exfoliate treated areas more quickly

When can I exercise again?

Avoid strenuous workouts, sweating, and heated environments for at least 7 days post-procedure. Sweat can irritate healing skin and increase the risk of complications. Additionally, gyms and shared spaces can put you at higher risk for infection of the treated skin.

Is oozing or weeping skin normal?

A small amount of oozing or moisture is normal in the first 1–3 days, especially with more aggressive treatments. If it continues or develops a yellow/green tinge or foul odor, contact your provider to rule out infection.

What products should I avoid after a laser?

Avoid for at least 2 weeks (or as instructed):

- Retinoids (Retin-A, Tretinoin)
- Alpha/beta hydroxy acids (AHAs/BHAs)
- Vitamin C serums (unless approved)
Scrubs, exfoliants, or facial devices
- Fragranced or alcohol-based products

When should I call the clinic?

Contact your provider immediately if you experience:

- Fever or chills
- Pus, foul odor, or spreading redness
Severe swelling or pain
- Signs of an allergic reaction (rash, hives, itching beyond expected level)

Can I apply ice or cold compresses?

Yes—cold packs (wrapped in clean cloth) may be used in the first 24–48 hours to reduce swelling and discomfort. Avoid direct ice contact on the skin. You can also use a cold compress — put a clean washcloth in a clean bowl of ice water. Wring out the washcloth and allow the cool towel to conform to the face

What if I see pigmentation changes?

Temporary hyperpigmentation or hypopigmentation can occur, especially in medium to deep laser treatments or in darker skin types. Avoid sun exposure, follow skincare guidance, and talk to your provider about brightening agents if needed.

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your cosmetic clinic for guidance. This FAQ is a general guide—always defer to your provider's instructions, as protocols vary by laser type and skin type.

What to Expect Week by Week

Week 1

- Skin will be **red, swollen, tight, and may ooze or crust.**
- Feels like a strong sunburn.
Care: Cleanse gently, apply ointment (like Aquaphor), no makeup, avoid sun.

Week 2

- Most crusting and peeling stop.
- The new skin underneath looks **bright pink and tender.**
Care: Switch to a lighter moisturizer if directed. You may use mineral makeup once skin is healed.

Weeks 3–4

- Pinkness is still noticeable but improving.
- Skin may flush with heat or exercise.
- **Care:** Keep moisturizing. Always wear sunscreen.

Weeks 5–6

- Skin tone becomes lighter pink or peach.
- Most people feel comfortable going out without makeup.
- **Care:** Gentle skincare only. Protect from sun.

Weeks 7–12

- Redness keeps fading.
- Skin looks smoother and healthier.
- **Care:** Continue sun protection. Your provider may allow vitamin C or retinoids.

Months 3–6

- Any leftover pinkness usually fades.
- Skin looks rejuvenated and more even.
- Collagen is still rebuilding under the surface.

Do:

- Use gentle cleanser and moisturizers.
- Apply sunscreen every single day.
Follow your provider's instructions.
Be patient—healing takes time.

Don't:

- Pick, scratch, or scrub peeling skin.
- Use harsh products unless approved.
- Expose skin to the sun (hat + sunscreen are musts).
- Expect results overnight—true improvement continues for months.