



Banish unwanted hair and blemishes permanently

By Deanna Huntwork, DO, General Surgeon



It's most people's New Year's resolution – to lose weight before summer. Although I'm a proponent of that plan myself, there are some other things you could lose before summer that would help you look good and feel better. What are they?

Unwanted hair, scars, birthmarks, spider veins, freckles, red blotches and other skin blemishes that you've always tried to hide – until now. Now you can have the nice skin you deserve, and you can have it in time to don that bathing suit.

A simple process called PhotoDerm can safely and effectively treat most blemishes and spider veins on an out-patient basis. It even removes hair permanently!

PhotoDerm is a non-invasive medical treatment that uses intense pulsed light therapy to reduce melanin, which is the dark pigment in your skin. During a treatment, cold gel is applied to the area we're focusing on. Using a computer-controlled hand piece, the light energy is "flashed" onto your skin. After your PhotoDerm treatment cycle, the treated vein or lesion will gradually fade and disappear. Hair will fall out.

Does a PhotoDerm treatment hurt? Some patients say they feel a slight sting, like the snap of a rubber band on the skin or like being splattered by bacon grease. I've found anesthetics are not necessary, but they can be applied prior to treatment. After the treatment, patients generally experience a sunburned feeling for a few hours. During that time, a good moisturizer should be used, along with aloe vera, to keep skin smooth and supple.

The most common side effects are usually increased redness, burning and tingling at the treatment site. However, this usually disappears completely within a few hours. Occasionally, there is a blister if a high energy wave was used to treat a complex condition, but that is a rarity. As with any pulsed light treatment, the area must be kept out of the sun to achieve optimum results.

How many treatments are needed? That depends on the size, location, depth and color of your lesion. Spider veins on the face and age spots generally do well with one or two treatments, while darker or deeper birthmarks may require additional visits. Port wine stains and leg veins usually need four to eight sessions.

As for hair removal, that usually takes four treatments. Hair grows in four cycles, thus to get all of it, we must "flash" all four cycles of hair. The good news is unwanted hair will be *permanently* removed.

As a matter of fact, most patients are extremely pleased with final results of their procedures. The improvement can be quite dramatic and I make every attempt to achieve the optimum result for my patients.

As PhotoDerm is considered to be cosmetic, it is not covered by insurance. However, it is less expensive than you might think – especially when you consider permanent results. My office gives free consultations and has a flexible, individualized approach to treatment. Remember, winter is the best time for PhotoDerm as the skin is its natural color. To restore your beautiful skin, call us at (509) 725-6560 for more information.

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