

THE PEARL

DERMATOLOGY

Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) aka Photofacial

IPL stands for Intense Pulsed Light and is commonly known as a “photofacial.” IPL is not a laser but a light treatment where bright pulses of light are emitted from a crystal. This light is given off at different wavelengths that are predetermined by your healthcare provider and adjusted to different energies. This light treatment can target unwanted brown spots, redness, and broken blood vessels.

If you have unwanted sun damage in the form of brown pigmentation, rosacea, redness, or broken blood vessels, then you may be a candidate for IPL. **IPL IS NOT SAFE ON PATIENTS WHO ARE TAN, OR WHO HAVE DARKER SKIN TONES, WHICH ARE CALLED SKIN TYPES V AND VI.** Performing IPL on patients with this skin type can result in hyperpigmentation of the treated areas, which is the opposite of our goals to even pigmentation of the skin. If you are a patient with a darker skin tone, please consult with your healthcare provider to see which treatment would be the best fit for you.

Pre-Treatment Instructions

1. Avoid extensive sun exposure, harsh acids, exfoliants, and retinols about 1 week prior to treatment.
2. If you have a history of oral Herpes Simplex (fever blisters/cold sores), please alert your healthcare provider, as the laser may trigger an outbreak. We may recommend that you take an oral antiviral agent such as Valtrex starting 1-2 days prior to your procedure to prevent an outbreak.

Treatment Day

IPL is usually done in a series of treatments with anywhere from 3 to 5 treatments every 4-6 weeks. To maintain your results, we recommend maintenance treatments every 6-12 months.

1. At your first treatment, please arrive 1 hour and 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time, to allow us time to clean, photograph, and apply a topical numbing cream to the treatment area. At your following treatments, you may either numb in the office or at home. We will take photos every 6 months to keep for our records. Please notify one of our front desk employees if you would like to numb from home so they can provide you with the proper numbing kit and instructions.
2. We recommend that you wear comfortable clothes to your appointments. We offer a disposable gown and a headband if needed. If you tend to get cold easily from air conditioning, bring a sweater or light jacket to wear while you are waiting for the numbing cream to take effect. An enjoyable book, iPad or Kindle is also recommended.
3. After numbing for an hour, we will remove the numbing cream and apply a cool gel to the skin. This serves as a barrier to the skin for the light to penetrate and acts as a cooling agent. Your healthcare provider will then determine which settings would be best and perform the treatment. Most patients do not find this treatment to be uncomfortable. During the treatment, a medical assistant will blow cold air onto your skin to help with the heat. The light will appear bright, but your eyes are safely covered with our eye shields.
4. After treatment, we will remove the gel and apply sunscreen to your skin.

1. Once you leave our office, you may apply any makeup you would like.
2. We recommend avoiding any strenuous exercise and exposure to excess heat (strong sun, hot shower) after treatment, but you may resume all normal activities the following day.
3. Practice gentle skincare, avoiding any harsh acids, exfoliating scrubs, and retinols for about 5-7 days after treatment.
4. "Coffee grounding" is quite common to see after your 1st treatment for those who have a lot of dark freckles or brown spots. It will seem like your brown spots or freckles are getting darker and then they will eventually fade. **DO NOT** try to exfoliate these spots off. After your 2nd or 3rd treatment, you might not see any "coffee grounding" at all or a very minimal amount. **THIS IS NORMAL.** The IPL is still working on your brown spots on a microscopic level. Sometimes, specific types of brown spots do not respond to the IPL at all and may require a separate treatment to remove them. If some spots are more persistent after your 3rd or 4th treatment, discuss with your healthcare provider other options.
5. As always, wear sunscreen daily & reapply if you know you will have extended periods of sun exposure!

Possible Risks & Complications

Immediately after treatment, most people are pink and splotchy for a few hours. Occasionally some people may experience some swelling for a day or two. Side effects include redness, swelling, coffee grounding, a temporary burning sensation, and blistering. If you develop a blister, please notify our office so that you can have proper treatment. Untreated blisters can lead to scarring.

Recommended Post-Procedure Products

1. EltaMD Gentle Foaming Cleanser
2. SkinCeuticals CE Ferulic or Phloretin
3. Colorescience All Calm Multi-Correction Serum (Recommended for Rosacea patients)
4. Colorescience Even Up Multi-Correction Serum (Recommended for Hyperpigmentation patients)
5. Colorescience Even Up SPF
6. EltaMD Clear SPF 46 / EltaMD Daily SPF 40 / Colorescience Glow SPF 50 / Colorescience Flex SPF 50