CO2 Laser Resurfacing Pre and Post Care Instructions

******CO2 laser treatments are fully customizable and range from minimal/no downtime to almost two weeks for fully ablative facials. Please note that the following instructions encompass the full range of downtime, and not every piece will be applicable to those with mild treatments. ******

What to Expect

CO2 laser resurfacing treatments are known to help soften fine lines, brighten the complexion, and improve skin tone/texture. CO2 treatments are highly customizable to meet your specific skin concerns and goals, ranging from mild to more aggressive treatments. Please understand that while we are generally very accurate with expected "social downtime," everyone is different and heals at different rates.

For optimal results, please review the following instruction:

Pre-Treatment

- You may be required to "pre-treat" the skin with topical products to help reduce the risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. This typically starts 2 weeks prior to your treatment and will be discussed during your consult, if applicable.
- If approved by your physician, discontinue the use of NSAIDs such as Advil, Motrin, Aleve, and aspirin for 1 week prior to your treatment.
- ***HYDRATE AND PROTECT*** *(7-14 days prior to treatment)*
    - Moisturize skin at least 2x a day (AM/PM)
    - Increase water intake to 8 glasses of water (8oz) or more per day.
    - Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, and all artificial tanning agents (tanning beds, tanning lotions, and spray tans). If sun exposure is unavoidable, use a zinc oxide-based sunscreen of at least SPF 30.
- ***PREPARE YOUR SKIN*** (3-7 days before your treatment)
    - Stop any topical retinoid therapy. If taking Accutane, please discuss with your provider to determine when to discontinue (typically at least 6 months prior to treatment).
    - If you have a history of fever blisters, ask your provider about starting an antiviral prophylaxis 3-7 days before the treatment.
- Please ensure you have access to the following items:

- Mild cleanser.
- Unscented moisturizer (such as CeraVe), which will be used once the post laser cream is no longer needed.
- White Vinegar Spray (this will be provided to you for more aggressive treatments)
- Optional: Tylenol, Benadryl, Ice packs

- ***Contraindications:*** patients who are pregnant or have an electronic implant (ex: Insulin pump, pacemaker, LVAD, etc.) are not a candidate for VirtueRF treatments.

Day of Treatment

- Please arrive at your appointment with no makeup.
- You may be asked to thoroughly cleanse the skin in the area to be treated. Remove all hairspray, makeup, gels, ointments, lotions, self-tanning products, & perfumes.
- Do not use an alcohol-based cleanser as it may remove moisture from the treatment area.
- A topical numbing cream will be applied to the skin. After the allotted time has passed, the cream will be removed and the skin cleansed and prepped.

Post Treatment

Home care is a very important part of your CO2 treatment and helps to ensure you get the best results possible. As previously stated, CO2 laser treatments are fully customizable and range from minimal/no downtime to almost two weeks for fully ablative facials. Please note that the following instructions encompass the full range of downtime, and not every piece will be applicable to those with mild treatments.

- Immediately following treatment, you will experience a burning sensation which many describe as comparable to a sunburn. This can last up to several hours following treatment, but typically begins to subside after the first 30-45 minutes. The skin will then start to feel tight and dry.
- Swelling is part of the healing process and if tolerable, should not be treated. If needed, the use of cold compresses or ice packs will help relieve the swelling. Swelling is typically worse when you first wake up in the morning, especially around the eyes and mouth.
- Post treatment discomfort is typically minimal, and is often described as mild discomfort rather than pain. If needed, over-the counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (regular or extra strength Tylenol) and Benadryl (for swelling and itching) may be used. Avoid ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), and Aspirin for 24 hours after the procedure.
- If you experience itching, ensure the skin is adequately moisturized. If itching continues, you may apply a thin layer of OTC hydrocortisone lotion/cream but do not apply more than once every 12 hours.

We recommend the NOON Pre & Post Care kits for optimal results and for ease of use. These products can also be continued after recovery for skincare. If not using the after care kits please follow the instructions below.

Post- Treatment Days 1-3

- **Cleanse**

- Always wash your hands before touching your face. Gently cleanse the skin 3 times a day with plain, lukewarm water and a gentle cleanser beginning the morning after treatment. If the cleanser is not adequately removing the ointment when you wash your face, you may cleanse with a solution of vinegar and water (1 teaspoon of white vinegar per 1 cup of water).
- Spray or pat this mixture on the area and rinse off gently.

- **Vinegar Sprays (only if instructed by your provider)**
  - White vinegar sprays are very cleansing and soothing. We will provide you with a premixed vinegar spritz. (Mix 1 teaspoon of white vinegar mixed with 1 cup of water for your vinegar soak solution.)
  - After cleansing the skin and patting dry, spray the fine mist to the entire treated area. Repeat this 3x. Allow 15 seconds in between sprays. and respray. These sprays will help with pain, dissolve some of the residue, and are anti-microbial which decreases infections.
  - Sprays can be done every several hours. The sprays can be done at any time of the day, but may be more effective after your shower or after you wash your face and before reapplying the post laser balm.
- **Moisturize**
  - After cleansing your face, apply your post laser cream (creating a thin barrier), taking care to cover all treated areas. The occlusive or semi-occlusive barrier is needed to provide a protective layer that will hold moisture in the skin and provide protection to the skin from pollutants in the air as the skin heals.
  - Do not be alarmed if you experience “pinpoint” bleeding, this is normal and appears worse than it is because the cream causes it to spread. Gently blot your face, BUT DO NOT RUB YOUR SKIN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.
  - Reapply the post laser cream as needed. Do not allow the treated area to dry out.
  - Discontinue the use of the post laser balm between days 2-4, when you feel the sandpaper texture and the skin is no longer sensitive, oozing, or raw. Please be mindful of the products you switch to and ensure it is a bland, fragrance free moisturizer or cream. We recommend Noon’s OMG Cream.
- **Avoid**
  - Exercise, gym, or other strenuous activity until you have sandpaper like texture to the skin and you are no longer requiring laser balm.
  - Avoid hot environments, saunas, and swimming pools. You can shower but hot water/steam should be avoided. When showering, be sure to wash your hair behind you to avoid getting shampoo directly on the treated area.
  - Avoid “picking at” and/or scrubbing the skin – allow it to gently exfoliate with the washing process.
  - Avoid sleeping flat. Continue to sleep with your head elevated on pillows (head above heart) the first 2-3 nights to help minimize swelling.
  - Avoid direct sun exposure. Do NOT apply sunblock during the first 4 days of healing. Wear a protective hat for the first 2 weeks while outdoors.
  - Avoid dirty, dusty environments, perfumes, and hairsprays on treated areas.

Post Treatment Days 4-7 Healing

- Each patient will fall into a spectrum of swelling and redness over the next 5-7 days. You may experience a mild sunburn-like effect, while others may have significant swelling, redness, and itching – depending on your skin type and treatment level.
- You WILL experience a mild sandpaper texture to the skin as you heal and while not always visible to the naked eye, should not be exfoliated. Allow this feeling to fade on its own.
- Continue to cleanse the treated area with a gentle face wash for 7 days. DO NOT SCRATCH, PICK OR RUB THE SKIN VIGOROUSLY.
- DO NOT apply makeup or other products to the treated area unless directed by your provider. Once the skin feels rough like sandpaper, you may resume wearing makeup (preferably mineral based).
- DO NOT put any other creams or lotions on the skin except for the recommended moisturizers.
- Do not use sunscreen for at least 3-4 days after your treatment, and ensure you are staying out of direct sunlight.
- Be careful with hair products (shampoo, hair spray, etc.) and perfumes, so they do not touch the treated area.

Post Laser Skin Pinkness

- Pinkness is the most common complaint of post laser patients. Pinkness is a normal healing process and is a sign of newly formed skin. Pinkness is extremely variable and can last several weeks in some patients, and although rare, several months in others.
- A general rule is that the longer the pinkness, the better the result as more collagen is being formed.
- When pinkness is extreme or lasts longer than expected, it can be a sign of over aggressive scrubbing, rubbing, or a sign that your skin may be irritated by certain products.

After Week 1

- After the first week you can resume most activities OTHER than sun exposure.
- DO NOT undergo waxing, micro-dermabrasion, exfoliation, or light peels over the area for 3 months from the day of treatment.
- Avoid sun exposure or tanning for at least 4 weeks after treatment. Wear sunscreen DAILY to help prevent any discoloration problems that may be caused by direct or indirect sunlight.

If you are experiencing an increase in pain, swelling, or have any signs of infection please call AND text our office at 480-336-9034 (Arizona patients) or 540-870-6211 (Virginia patients).

Date *

MM/DD/YYYY

Signature *