

## *Laser Hair Removal*

Laser hair removal is a non-invasive method of photoepilation which does not require the use of needles or messy chemical creams. Since thousands of hairs can be zapped in a single treatment session, large areas such as the back, shoulders, arms and legs can be effectively and efficiently treated. Multiple treatments are usually required to make hair removal permanent.

In our office, we treat patients per area. Areas are defined as the following:

Face – female  
Upper Lip – female  
Face – male (beard)  
Axillae (underarms)  
Bikini Line  
Full Bikini (Brazilian)  
Back or Chest and Abdomen (per area treated)  
Legs  
Lower Legs  
Arms

For long-term hair removal, the germinating centers of the hair follicle must be destroyed. And because hair is only destroyed during the active growth cycle, patients usually require multiple treatments over several weeks to months for long-term removal results.

## *Photothermal Reaction:*

When laser light hits the skin it can either be absorbed, reflected, transmitted, or scattered. But for a clinical effect to occur the light must be absorbed; the transmitted or reflected light has no effect. How much is absorbed depends on what chromophore (a chemical that absorbs light at a specific frequency and so imparts color to a molecule) is present in the skin.

During hair removal, a photothermal effect occurs within the skin. This effect arises when a chromophore absorbs the wavelength of energy (light produced by the laser) and the target is destroyed from the absorbed energy being converted into heat.

## *Risks and Complications*

Although complications following laser surgery are infrequent, there are some risks associated with the use of lasers. These include:

- Bleeding, blistering, swelling, and infection (including reactivation of the herpes simplex virus – cold sores). Please inform your physician if you have a history of cold sores.
- Alterations of skin pigmentation and/or texture. Hyperpigmentation (darkening of the skin) may be reversed with bleaching creams. Hypopigmentation (lightening of the skin) may be permanent.
- Hair loss in the treated area is temporary but may be permanent.
- Scarring which may require additional treatment.