

IPL- The Hair Removal Buzz

Jan2008 - Neighbourhood Express

Looking for a safe and effective solution for removal of unwanted hair? New and emerging therapies and exciting developments are happening all the time. One of the most gentle and non-invasive approaches is with *Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems*.



These systems release precisely controlled strong pulses of filtered light that are absorbed by melanin, the pigment in hair. This heats up the hair and destroys the cells responsible for hair growth, to achieve long-term hair reduction.

How is this carried out?

You will be asked to put on goggles to protect your eyes. A layer of chilled gel is applied to the treatment area to guide the light into the skin. The area

will also be cooled to increase comfort during treatment. The light guide is placed on the skin and a short pulse of light is released, targeting many follicles simultaneously. The applicator is then moved to the adjacent patch of skin and the process is repeated until the entire area is treated. The chilled gel is removed and the area moisturized. The darker the hair, the more easily it is treated. Since darker hair contains more melanin, it will heat up more easily. Fairer hair contains less melanin and has to be treated in a different manner, but is just as easily treated with no pain or down time. The hair follicles are damaged by heat but the hairs remain in the follicles initially. The hairs fall out after 1-3 weeks as the epidermis renews.

During this period, the hairs will seem to 'grow' as they are pushed out by the new epidermis. After treatment, the hairs are loose in the follicle and can sometimes be easily pulled out with tweezers or will come out when slightly rubbed with a loofah.

How many treatments are necessary?

Only hair in the active growth stage of the growth cycle is affected, therefore multiple treatments are needed. Treatment is conducted every two to eight



IPL- The Hair Removal Buzz (cont.)

weeks, depending on the site treated, until a satisfactory result is seen. The number of treatments required varies, but typically five or more treatments are required for optimum results.

Treatments can take from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on which area is being treated. Prior to any treatment you should receive a full consultation which identifies your expectations and provides a complete explanation of the treatment. A medical history is taken to confirm suitability for treatment and, if you wish to proceed, a written, informed consent.

I like to remind my clients that it can take four to six weeks after hair removal to see any results. Initially, the hair that has been cut off in the shaft will have to work its way out. So, the hair will continue to grow, which may seem as though nothing has happened, post treatment, for this duration of time.

The length of time can vary from person to person and between areas treated. I usually tell all my clients that they need to give hair removal a minimum of two treatments before deciding whether or not it is working. Another advantage of the IPL laser hair removal is its wide treatment area. In fact, approximately 100-200 hairs can be treated with each flash of the light allowing large areas of the body to be treated at each session

(i.e. the legs, back and chest can be treated quickly in a single session). At the same time, IPL systems can be very precisely focused, so that hair can be eliminated from delicate places. These systems are among the most innovative devices now available. They can help you say goodbye to your constant battle (shaving, tweezing and waxing) with unwanted hair growth.

Written By: Joanne Fruman