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PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY WITH 5-ALA AND INTENSE PULSED LIGHT (IPL)

What is Intense Pulsed Light and 5-ALA?

IPL is broad spectrum light filtered to achieve a therapeutic wavelength range and used to treat a variety of skin conditions. 5-ALA is a light reactive substance produced naturally by the skin and used topically to enhance the effects of the IPL.

How does IPL with 5-ALA work?

During an IPL/5-ALA treatment, areas containing increased brown and red pigment, as well as damaged collagen and elastic fibers and abnormal precancerous cells, absorb more of the light and become fragmented. Gradually in the days after treatment, the body clears these damaged areas and makes new collagen and elastin fibers. The skin looks more vital and healthy.

What conditions can be treated or improved with ALA/IPL?

This treatment can be used to treat a variety of skin conditions, including age spots, broken capillaries, sun damage, mottled pigmentation, redness from rosacea, acne (including cystic acne), photo-aging, skin texture changes, and precancerous actinic keratoses. Several studies have also reported a decrease in the incidence of future skin cancer in the treated areas.

What should I expect after treatment?

Minimal redness, with or without peeling, almost like a sunburn, is seen in some patients, but it usually disappears within three to five days. About ten percent of patients may have some mild temporary swelling that lasts for only several days. Your skin will be more light sensitive for 48 hours after treatment and you should take the appropriate precautions.

When can I return to my normal activities?

As long as you avoid sun exposure, you may return to your activities immediately. There is usually no recovery time needed.

When will the results show?

Some brown spots or superficial vessels may develop a dusky grey or brown color immediately after treatment. These fade over the days following the treatment. Most patients notice a progressive improvement in the texture and health of your skin over the course of 2 to 4 treatments.

How many treatments will I need?

Typically, a series of two or three treatments at three to four week intervals yields the best results.

How long will the effects last?

The studies to date demonstrate that the response varies depending upon the condition treated and the patient's compliance with the prescribed skin care regimen and sun protection.