

# CO<sub>2</sub> Laser Treatment For Scars

## What is a CO<sub>2</sub> Laser?

A carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) laser uses gases to produce a beam of infrared laser light that points accurately onto the skin. The laser beam can't be seen by the human eye but will cause an effect on skin that it touches.

## What is a CO<sub>2</sub> Laser used for?

The CO<sub>2</sub> laser is used for treating thickened and raised scars. The laser damages the scar tissue and allows it to rearrange itself into a softer and less noticeable scar. This procedure is usually performed under general anaesthetic.

## What might my child feel after having the laser therapy?

Your child may experience some of the following symptoms after the laser therapy:

- > A hot 'sunburnt' feeling
- > Itch which is part of the healing process
- > Mild discomfort
- > Irritated eyes if treatment is on the face

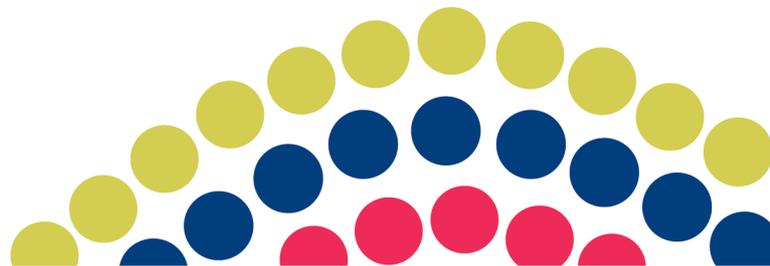
## What changes can I expect to see around the treated area?

- > Swelling at the area
- > Redness
- > Pinpoint bleeding followed by scabbing
- > Weeping and oozing
- > Dryness
- > Blistering

## Discharge Information

### Pain Relief

- > Mild discomfort after the procedure can be normal. Apply cool compresses for comfort (frozen wet hand towels, frozen peas, ice packs) but **avoid applying ice directly to the skin**.
- > Simple over-the-counter pain relief medication such as Ibuprofen (Brufen®/Nurofen®) or Aspirin should be avoided.



### For more information

Burns and Plastics Services  
 Women's and Children's Hospital  
 72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006  
 Telephone (08) 8161 7000



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 and endorsed by WCHN consumers



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**Itching**

- > If itching is bothering your child an antihistamine such as Cetirizine (Zyrtec®) can help.

**Laser on the face**

- > Sleep with two pillows to elevate their head and assist with decreasing any swelling.
- > Clean areas twice a day and apply paraffin at least three time a day.
- > Avoid picking – any scabs that do not come off easily in the shower should be left alone until they do.

**Dressing and Showering**

- > Your child should bathe daily if they have no dressings and/or when dressings removed.
- > Ensure the water is warm only, not hot, as this may irritate the healing skin.
- > If your child has a dressing on after treatment you will be told by your doctor or nurse how to care for it (including showering and when to remove it).
- > Once the dressing is removed, apply moisturiser at least three times a day.
- > Avoid picking – any scabs that do not come off easily in the shower should be left alone until they do.

**After care (sun care)**

- > Avoid direct sun exposure for three months.
- > Apply sun block with a minimum SPF 50+.
- > Sun block with titanium oxide or zinc oxide (zinc cream) will provide greater protection for treated areas.
- > Wear broad brimmed hat, long sleeve shirt and sunglasses when outside.

**Return to school**

- > Most children can return to school the following day.
- > Sports and other activities can recommence as tolerated by your child.

**Follow - Up**

- > The Burns Nurse Consultant will call you a week after the treatment to check- in on how your child is doing. Your child does not need to be with you for the phone call nor do you need to wait around for the call (message will be left and you can return the call if there are any problems).
- > Face to face follow up usually arranged for 6 weeks.

**If you are concerned about any of the following please contact the Burns Nurse Consultant during office hours on (08) 8161 7000 or bring your child in to WCH Paediatric Emergency Department**

- Fever (over 38.5°C)
- Increasing redness, swelling or other changes in wound appearance
- Pus or Ooze
- Bad smell from treated area

