Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# How To Care for Your Skin After Your Vascular Laser Treatment

This information explains how to care for your skin after your vascular laser treatment. It also explains what to expect as your skin heals.

Your skin in the treated area is very delicate. It's important to take good care of it while it heals. This will help you get the best results from your treatment. It will also help prevent problems.

## Caring for your skin

Your nurse will review these skin care instructions with you.

- If a crust forms over the treated area, put petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) on it once a day. Keep doing this every day until the crust goes away. Do not take off the crust.
- Protect the treated area from irritation.
  - Do not scratch or rub the area.
  - Do not shave the area if it's swollen or has a crust.
  - Cover the treated area with a bandage if your clothing will rub it.
- Protect the treated area from the sun.
  - It's OK to put sunscreen on the treated area. It's best to also cover it with clothing or a hat.
  - Do not tan the treated area.

- It's OK to shower.
  - Do not use a washcloth on the treated area.
  - Avoid using scented soap or body wash on the treated area.
  - Do not rub the treated area to dry it. Pat it gently.
- If the skin in the treated area is blistered, raw, or broken, do not put it underwater. Avoid baths, hot tubs, and swimming until the area is healed.
- Do not wear makeup on the treated area until your skin is healed.
- It's OK to put unscented lotion on the treated area.

# Managing discomfort

If you have discomfort after your procedure, taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can help. Acetaminophen is safe for most people, but not everyone. Do not take acetaminophen if your healthcare provider has told you it is not safe for you.

Avoid taking these medicines to help with discomfort during the first week after your procedure:

- Aspirin
- Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®)
- Other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

These medicines can cause more bruising in the treated area. It's OK to take them if your healthcare provider told you to take them for another reason.

Read *How To Check if a Medicine or Supplement Has Aspirin, Other NSAIDs, Vitamin E, or Fish Oil* (www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement) to learn more about which medicines are NSAIDs or have NSAIDs in them.

# Other things to know

- The treated area will turn blue-gray, red, or purple. It will look like a bruise. The color will slowly fade over 1 to 2 weeks. If you want to hide the red or purple color, using concealing makeup with a green base can help. Do not put makeup on the treated area until your skin is healed.
- The treated area will get better over a few weeks.
- You may need to have more than 1 treatment to get the best results.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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