

# Tattoo Removal Preparation

## Does it hurt?

Pain tolerance levels differ dramatically. We recommend Anaesthetic Gel to minimize any pain that you might experience during your treatments. This will be discussed with you during your initial consultation prior to the procedure.

Options include:

- Local Anaesthetic: prior to your treatment, you may apply an Anaesthetic Gel to numb the skin. These creams are available with a script from your doctor, the formula we find most effective is LIGNOCAINE 5% BENZOCAINE 3% TETRACAIN 2% IN PLO. This is made by a compounding chemist. Your Doctor will advise if this formula is suitable base on your medical history.
- Paracetamol: For those patients who can take paracetamol (eg Panadol), 2 x 500mg tablets taken 30-60 minutes prior to your treatment may help with pain and discomfort. (Do NOT take Aspirin).

## What should I do before my Tattoo Removal treatment?

- Avoid sun exposure to the tattoo being treated. This can be achieved by covering the area with a dressing (including a 2cm additional border) for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to treatment. If you are concerned, consult with your doctor to see if a longer period is required.
- Avoid airbrush tanning and tan lotion applications for at least 2 weeks prior to the treatment. If previously exposed to such tanning products, gently scrub the tattoo site with soap daily for a week leading up to treatment.
- If the treatment area around the tattoo has hair (e.g. male chest) it is recommended you shave the area including a 2cm border around the tattoo the day before treatment.
- If discussed in your initial consult by your Laser Practitioner, apply an anaesthetic cream 30-60 minutes prior to your treatment to the tattoo area.
- Discuss the use of the following drugs with your doctor at least a week before your procedure, as generally the procedure will not be able to go ahead if you are taking these drugs.
  - Aspirin
  - Plavix
  - Warfarin
  - Anti-Inflammatory drugs, or other blood thinning medications.

DO NOT stop any medication until you have discussed this with your doctor.

# Tattoo Removal FAQ's

## **Q: How does laser tattoo removal work?**

A: As the laser light passes through the top layer of skin, the targeted ink particles absorb the energy and shatter into smaller pieces. This allows your immune system 'scavenger cells' to remove these ink particles more effectively from the body.

## **Q: How long does the treatment take?**

A: Depending on the size of the tattoo, treatments usually take between 5 and 20 minutes.

## **Q: How often do I need to have a treatment?**

A: Multiple treatments are necessary to break down the ink particles so the body can dispose of them. Given the role of the immune system, best results are noted when treatments are performed 6-12 weeks apart. The rate of ink removal is affected by an individual's immune system function.

## **Q: How long will it take before I see some change in the tattoo?**

A: Most people will note a change within 1-3 treatments depending on ink, size and location of tattoo. Minimal change will be noted directly after the first treatment. Some people may even see their tattoo get darker with their first treatment. Multiple sessions are needed to remove the tattoo. For best results follow our instructions and advice.

## **Q: If the tattoo looks healed can I come in before six weeks?**

A: No, it takes 6-12 weeks for the proper immune response to be effective.

## **Q: Do different tattoo colours respond differently to the laser?**

A: Yes. Different ink colours and amounts are used within tattoos. This can affect the treatment outcome and results. The age and brilliance (the amount of fading present) of a tattoo will also give a clue as to the total number of treatments needed. Older and more faded tattoos require fewer treatments.

- Dark colours (black, browns and blues) as well as red-based colours (red, orange and purple) respond best with to laser treatment.
- Green, yellow and florescent colours are more difficult to treat. They take longer to fade and, in some instances, may never resolve completely with laser treatments alone.

## **Q: Can cosmetic tattoos be removed with laser?**

A: Cosmetic tattoos (such as lip and eyeliner tattoos) are in many instances made of iron-based inks. A test treatment spot must always be performed first to determine whether the tattoo ink will oxidize and blacken. An oxidized tattoo can still be treated but may take 4 to 6 treatments. We take extreme care and caution when treating tattoos near the eyes because of the risk of eye damage. Protective eye shields are worn that block out the laser light.

85% of tattoos can be completely removed, however we recommend a consultation and assessment to guide and advise you on your individual tattoo based on its location, size and colour.

## **Q: Can all skin types be treated?**

A: Yes, we can theoretically treat all skin types however we only treat up to skin type 5 as darker skin types are prone to more complications.

## **Q: Can multi-coloured tattoos be removed fully?**

A: In most situations, yes, but not always. We always recommend a consultation and assessment prior to going ahead with treatment.

**Q: Can I have just a piece of the tattoo removed?**

A: Yes, the laser is quite accurate and can remove unwanted parts of tattoos.

**Q: What are common risks associated with laser treatment?**

A: As with all medical procedures, complications can occur with laser treatment.

- Scarring can result from the laser treatment and with the new advanced lasers it affects about 2 in every 100 patients. In order to minimize the risk of scarring, it is important to follow our post procedure instructions and to treat any post procedure infection promptly. Some patients are predisposed to scarring and this should be discussed with your doctor.
- Pre-existing scarring or other skin blemishes may already be present in the skin but may be hidden by the tattoo. These skin changes may have arisen from the placement of the original tattoo, previous attempts to remove the tattoo, from sun damage or from the natural aging process. Once the tattoo is removed, some of these blemishes may be more noticeable, making the tattooed area appear different to the surrounding skin.
- Temporary skin changes include redness, swelling, pain and crusting and are to be expected following each treatment. Bruising and blistering are common but should resolve with good wound care.
- Infections are rare (less than 1 patient in 100). It is important that any suspected infection be reviewed by a doctor as soon as possible.
- Irregular skin pigmentation and texture changes (the feel of the skin) can occur as a result of the laser treatment, but these changes usually return to "normal" within 6 to 12 months. In 10 to 20% of cases, these changes are permanent. Darker skin types are at higher risk of permanent changes in pigmentation and texture.
- Some patients have a history of persistent redness and itching of the skin after having the tattoo applied. This may mean that the patient is having an allergic reaction to the ink. The laser used to remove the ink can cause the allergic reaction to come back and be even worse.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

See you soon!

Larissa and the team at Riss' Beauty Bar + Hair x