

Halo Aftercare

What to expect while your skin heals, and how to care for the treated area.

What to expect

Redness

Redness is normal and expected. It generally increases in intensity during the first few days, with day 3 being the most intense. Redness can persist for up to 7 days, depending on the aggressiveness of the treatment.

Pinpoint bleeding

Pinpoint bleeding may occur. It can last from a few hours up to 12 hours, depending on the treatment depth, and may be limited to certain treated areas.

Swelling

Swelling immediately after treatment is common and expected. A cold compress or ice pack can help relieve it. To reduce further swelling, you may choose to sleep in an upright position on the first night. Swelling is often more noticeable the first morning after treatment, especially under the eyes. It may last 2-4 days, depending on the aggressiveness of the treatment.

Warmth

The treated area may feel extremely warm for 12-24 hours after treatment. Cold compresses or ice packs may provide comfort.

Bronzing, dryness and peeling

On day 2 or 3, you may notice tiny dark spots and a bronzed appearance. These are MENDS (microscopic epidermal necrotic debris). In heavily pigmented skin, or in areas with sun-damaged pigmented lesions, MENDS may contain more melanin and make the skin look bronzed, with small areas that appear crusted. Do not scratch them off. This is part of the healing process as treated tissue works its way out and fresh skin regenerates.

During this time, skin may feel very dry and like sandpaper, then begin to flake and peel. Peeling on the face may take 5-7 days to complete. On the neck, chest or other body areas, it may take up to 2 weeks.

After peeling

Once peeling is complete, skin may have a rosy, pink glow that gradually resolves. Your clinician will advise you when and what kind of makeup you may use.

Comfort and medication

Antiviral medication

If an antiviral was prescribed, continue to take it as directed.

Discomfort

Over-the-counter oral pain relievers, such as Extra Strength Tylenol, may help. Use prescribed pain medication only if ordered by your doctor.

Itching

Itching during healing is normal. Oral Benadryl may help, but can cause drowsiness. Do not scratch the treated area; scratching can cause scarring and pigmentation complications.

At-home care

Follow these steps gently while the treated skin heals.

- **Protect and moisturize.** Immediately after treatment, your clinician may apply an occlusive barrier such as Aquaphor, EltaMD or Cicalfate. Reapply as needed to keep skin moist. A petroleum-based moisturizer may suit more aggressive treatments; a cream may be sufficient for less aggressive treatments.
- **Cleanse gently.** Beginning the morning after treatment, cleanse twice a day with plain, lukewarm water and a gentle cleanser such as Cetaphil. Use your hands, then pat dry with a soft cloth. Do not rub, scrub, exfoliate or use a skin-care brush such as Clarisonic on the treated area. These can cause scarring and pigmentation complications.
- **Reapply moisturizer.** Apply generously over the treated area and reapply whenever skin feels dry. For severe dryness, add EltaMD or Aquaphor on top of your moisturizer, or mix it in.
- **Let peeling happen naturally.** Peeling and flaking often begin within 24 hours. Allow skin to come off naturally. Do not pick, rub or force off skin during healing; this can cause scarring, pigmentation complications and infection. Gentle, more frequent washing can help promote peeling.
- **Use sunscreen every day.** Sunscreen is a must, starting on the day of treatment and continuing vigilantly for up to 3 months. Use the recommended zinc oxide sunscreen (UVA and UVB), SPF 30. Apply 20 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every 2 hours. If you must be in direct sun, wear a hat and clothing that covers the treated area. Sun exposure may cause blistering, scarring, hyperpigmentation or hypopigmentation. Avoid sun exposure for 2 months after treatment.
- **Makeup.** Makeup can typically be worn once peeling is complete.
- **Showering.** For the next few days, avoid getting shampoo directly on the treated area. You may shower with the back of your head toward the water to avoid the full force of the stream hitting your face.
- **Exercise.** Avoid strenuous exercise and sweating until the skin has healed.

When to contact the office

Some swelling immediately after treatment is expected. Contact the office immediately if you have excessive swelling or signs of infection, including:

- Drainage that looks like pus
- Increased warmth at or around the treated area
- Fever of 101.5°F or higher
- Extreme itching

Questions or concerns? Call Genesis Dermatology at **(561) 296-5222**.