



Joel Schlessinger,
M.D., F.A.A.D., F.A.A.C.S.



Joseph Niamtu III,
D.M.D., F.A.A.C.S.

Do laser treatments work?

Dr. Niamtu:

Many new conservative laser technologies have been

introduced in the last several years. Fraxel and Active FX are examples of these technologies. These devices are in fact different from previous laser technology, but not quite as good as the magazines make them sound. True, the down time is reduced, but so are the results. Aggressive CO2 laser resurfacing still remains the undefeated champion and gold standard for skin rejuvenation. Although the results are dramatic, the recovery can be extended for 2-4 weeks. With the fractional laser technology, instead of the entire skin surface being treated, only small areas of the skin are actually damaged. If you can imagine a polka

dot pattern, with the dots being the laser burn then you can appreciate the mechanism of fractional treatments. Only a controlled portion of the skin is damaged which makes the recovery much easier than previous aggressive treatments. As stated, the results are not commensurate with aggressive treatments. A patient can expect a mild to moderate improvement from a single treatment which has about a 4-6 day recovery. Generally, to see significant improvement, multiple fractional treatments are required. 2-5 treatments are performed several months apart and the cumulative effect can be significant. The bottom line is that for some patients the tried and true aggressive laser with a 2 week recovery may be the ticket for impressive results. Other patients do not want

Do I need to worry about UVA rays?

Dr. Schlessinger:

Absolutely! UVA rays actually may be worse

than UVB rays, the rays that are specifically rated in SPF numbers. While there is a classification system for UVA coming in the next several years, it isn't out yet and it is very important to have a sunscreen that contains both UVA and UVB protection.

For the time being, it is best to trust manufacturers rather than numbers on the bottle. In my practice, we tend to

provide Elta brand and LaRoche Posay Anthelios brand sunscreens to the majority of our patients who are concerned about protection. The Anthelios brand has a new product in SPF 60 with a unique product that protects for UVA exposure. Additionally, it comes in a very thin liquid that is excellent for acne-prone individuals.



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