



Dr Howard Brooks, MD, Medical Director Of Georgetown Skin Reviews The Uses And Benefits Of Lasers

Background: A skilled dermatologist with a distinguished background, Dr. Brooks has received recognition by patients, peers and the media, for his commitment to quality care.

A graduate of Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, DC, he completed his medical internship at Franklin Square Medical Center in Baltimore, MD, and his residency at Howard University Hospital, which included experience at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Children's National Medical Center and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

Interview

Q: Dr. Brooks I know you offer a variety of Laser treatments at Skin: Cosmetic Dermatology of Georgetown. Let's start with Fraxel--could you tell us what it does and what conditions it's most effective for?

A: Fraxel is a very diverse laser that can treat a variety of conditions and skin types. I mostly use for for resurfacing (acne and surgical scars) and to reduce fine lines and wrinkles. It is also used for melasma, discoloration and age spots. The advantage to Fraxel over other Erbium lasers, is that we can treat any skin type with minimal down time.

Q: How many treatments are needed and is there discomfort?

A: The number of treatments depends on several factors: 1. Skin type (the darker the skin, generally the more treatments needed). An estimate would be 5-6 treatments for a person with a darker complexion versus 3 treatments for someone with a lighter complexion. 2. What are we treating? If a patient has deep surgical or acne scars, they may need 1-2 more treatments than stated previously. 3. How aggressive can I be with treatments. This is very similar to point number 1; For a patient with very light skin, I can be every aggressive with my treatments. For example, if a patient with fair skin, blue eyes, blonde hair came for treatment of severe acne scarring I would be VERY aggressive in my settings (how much energy I use and how much surface area I am treating).

Often, people feel because this is a non ablative laser, it will be pain free. There is discomfort with the Fraxel. I ask my patients to come in an hour before treatment to apply topical numbing cream on the area to be treated. Most of my patients tolerate the procedure very well. In fact, I have a video on my website (www.Georgetownskin.com) showing a procedure and the patient's reaction to treatment.

Q) What about Genesis and Titan--what skin conditions can they improve and what are the benefits of each of them?

A) Laser Genesis is a non-ablative photo rejuvenation procedure that provides multiple benefits. It can reduced wrinkles, decrease pore size, reduce redness, I have seen a reduction in

discoloration as well. This sounds very similar to Fraxel. Depending on the amount of redness or ruddiness a patient has, I often use laser Genesis and Fraxel together. Fraxel is a much more aggressive treatment. I cannot even compare the two with regards to resurfacing or treating acne scarring. But genesis is superior to reduction of redness. Many patients come in wanting Fraxel (I think Reliance has done a fantastic job of marketing), but after I take a careful history and examine the skin, if there is mild redness, minimal or no scarring...I think offer the patient laser genesis.

Titan is a system that uses infrared heat to form new collagen over time and tighten the patient's skin. This is also a very versatile machine. I can use this on virtually any skin type and a variety of areas on the body. I have used the Titan on the neck, lower face (to decrease "laugh lines"), the forehead (brow lift), abdomen (tightening of the skin after pregnancy or weight loss), buttocks and thighs.

Q) Are there any risks involved in any of the laser treatments?

A) As with any medical procedure there are risks with lasers. This is why it is so important to go to a medical professional (doctor) for laser therapy. One of the most common side effects I see in my practice is burning of the skin; usually the wrong laser or wrong settings were used. Discoloration of the skin. This mostly occurs in people of color. Again, either the wrong laser or wrong settings were used. It is important to take a careful history from a patient. Lasers cannot be used during pregnancy; if a patient has a history of cold sores or herpes, he or she would need to be pre medicated before the procedure; scarring; and finally disappointment. I think it is so important, I cannot emphasize this enough, to get a sense of the patient's expectations. As a doctor, you need to REALISTICALLY educate the patient on what the laser can and cannot do, what the outcomes should be, how will this treat or improve a condition.

Q) What kind of training is involved to use the lasers properly?

A) Most dermatology programs here in the DC/Baltimore area, and I am sure in the US, provide training throughout residency with most types of lasers, botox, fillers and the common cosmetic procedures. Moreover, when you purchase a laser, the company will also provide training with a physician.

Q) Can you use a laser treatment in combination with another procedure to enhance the results?

A) Absolutely. I often do this. All of the patients that I see for cosmetic procedures, including lasers, also get educated on general skin care. Sunscreen should be used by everyone, no question. But also, there are so many products on the market, both over the counter, and ones sold in doctor's offices that enhance and improve the results.

Q) What about cost--can you give us a range of what someone would need to spend for optimal results?

A) It depends on what laser. For fraxel : single treatments can range from \$1,100-\$1,600 (I have heard), many practices, including mine, have packages available where there would be extra savings.

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Skin: Cosmetic Dermatology Of Georgetown

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