



Hair Removal Ellipse Flex IPL

What is Light-based Hair Removal?

Light-based hair removal refers to the long-term reduction of facial and body hair using a series of light-based treatments such as Laser or Intense Pulsed Light.

Hair Anatomy and Growth Cycle

To understand the mechanism of light-based hair removal, it is important to have an understanding of the hair structure and growth cycle. The human hair shaft is made up of a cortex surrounded by the cuticle. The cortex consists of cells containing melanin which give the hair its colour and the cuticle is a single layer of cells containing keratin. Hair colour is determined by the type of pigment in the hair – eumelanin is present in brown and black hair and pheomelanin is the type of pigment in blond and red hair. Grey or white hair has no melanin. The hair root is embedded in a pit in the skin called the hair follicle which is typically located at a depth of 1 to 5 mm beneath the skin. The depth is dependent on body site (eg. 1mm for upper lip and 5 mm for bikini line).

The life cycle of the human hair has four phases.

Anagen – growth phase (*phase when treatment is most successful*)

Catagen – degradation phase

Exogen – hair falls out of follicle

Telogen – resting phase

Individual hairs located in close proximity to each other may be in different phases of the cycle. The proportion of hair in a particular phase at any one time can vary with the anatomical body site – for example, 85 % of scalp hair is in the growing phase at any one time whereas only 20% of leg hair is in the growing phase at any one time. The length of the resting phase also varies depending on body location. For example, scalp hair has a resting period of 3 to 4 weeks, in comparison to leg hair which can be in the resting phase for 6 months.

How does it light-based hair removal work?

The Ellipse Flex IPL uses a narrow spectrum of light wavelengths which are selectively absorbed by eumelanin in the hair. This selective heating of the hair bulb and follicle to a certain temperature for a certain amount of time, causes damage to the follicle, hindering it's ability to produce new hair.

Light-based hair removal is unable to treat grey or white hair due to the lack of melanin in the hair bulb. It's ability to treat blond and red hair is also limited due to the lack of heat absorption in these hair colours.

IPL hair removal works best when the hair is in the anagen or growth phase of it's life cycle. So depending on the body site and the amount of hair in the growth phase, only a certain proportion of the hair will be successfully treated with one treatment. This is the reason why multiple treatments are required for successful long term hair removal.

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Am I a candidate for IPL Hair Removal?

If you have dark hair and light coloured skin, then light-based hair removal can be very effective. IPL and laser hair removal is not effective for grey, white, light blond or red hair colours.

Skin colour is also an important consideration before undergoing light-based hair removal. If there is a high content of melanin in the skin (for example, in darker skinned races, very olive complexions and in suntanned individuals) , the light will also be absorbed into the skin cells. This can lead to alterations in skin colour (patchy increased or decreased skin pigmentation) or a burn to the skin.

If you have an active skin condition (eg. Eczema, dermatitis, infection, open wound, suspicious mole or skin cancer) in the area to be treated of treatment , then treatment must be delayed until the condition has been treated and is fully resolved.

Hair must be present in the hair follicle to be treated, so you must not wax, pluck or use depilatory creams on the hair for at least two weeks prior to treatment.

How many treatments will I need?

Generally, most people require at least 4 to 6 treatments.

What is the time interval between treatments?

We wait until there is enough hair visible in the region to retreat again. The interval between treatments depends on the growth cycle of the hair and the anatomical location of the treatment area. As a general rule, the minimum time interval between treatments is 6 weeks.

What are the risks?

The risks of pigmentation alteration in the skin and a burn to the skin are very rare if you take the proper precautions. A consultation prior to treatment, to assess your skin type and to ascertain whether you are a candidate for treatment, is essential. People with dark, olive or suntanned skin cannot be treated. Tanning in the sun or solarium or use of fake tanning agents are not permitted for at least two weeks prior to treatment and deliberate sun-baking or solarium use should be avoided for a month after treatment.

Common Misconceptions

Many clinics advertise “permanent” hair removal. A lot of people are under the false belief that they can have one treatment and all the hair in the area that has been treated will be gone forever. Unfortunately, there is no technology today that can rid a person of all hair forever. There are, however, a limited number of medical laser and IPL devices that can markedly reduce hair growth for the long term. Ellipse Flex Intense Pulsed Light is one such device.

So if you are tired of regular waxing and you would like to throw away your razor then call us for a free assessment.