

Multiple laser therapy *benefits patients*

The science of using lasers to treat skin conditions is about 20 years old. Over that time, physicians and scientists have refined and developed laser treatment options so patients benefit from shorter treatment sessions, less chance of infection, fewer skin color changes, and shorter recovery periods.

Today, through the use of several lasers, dermatologic laser surgeons can treat many skin disorders and conditions. "The use of a laser on the skin was a revolutionary idea 20 years ago when we found selective photothermolysis, or selectively using a specific light wave length to target a skin anomaly to destroy it without damaging adjacent areas of the skin," says Dr. Matthew Kelleher, Director of the Advanced Cosmetic Laser and Surgery Center, 2400 Glenwood Avenue, Joliet. "Two dermatologists at Harvard University found delivering enough energy for the right amount of time would destroy just the thing they wanted to destroy, and nothing else. For instance, we found we could destroy a red tattoo, and not the surrounding skin. Or we could get rid of the little blood vessels caused by sun exposure."

About 10 years ago, physicians found they could use lasers to precisely vaporize layers of skin, a procedure called laser resurfacing. The use of the laser stimulated the body's wound repair system, dramatically improving wrinkles and tightening skin. "But there was a downside," Dr. Kelleher says. "We had created a wound, and there was the risk of infection, pain, skin color changes, and a somewhat lengthy recovery period. People didn't like having to spend a week or more while their face healed after the procedure."

About five years ago, nonablative collagen resurfacing was developed. "Here we choose the right type of laser to gently heat the dermis and trick the body into thinking there was a wound, without really creating one," Dr. Kelleher says. "It is relatively painless, there are minimal potential side effects, minimal risk, and no down time for the patient. The results are generally not as dramatic, but we

can repeat the procedure for additional improvement. We can achieve better skin tone and better appearance, without the risks.

The newest advancement is the use of radio frequency to gently and precisely heat the dermal collagen. This causes skin contraction and



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tightening as well as stimulating new dermal collagen growth. The goal is to achieve lifting and tightening of the facial and neck skin without putting the patient through a surgical procedure. This will avoid the pain, risk, recovery, scarring and cost of a face lift. The results tend to be more subtle than surgical lifting. This technology is called Thermacool and the procedure is called a Thermalift.

Dr. Kelleher takes the new technology one step better, with the use of multiple laser therapy, combining the use of several lasers in one therapy session. "In our practice, we have 12 lasers at our disposal to use to benefit each specific patient," Dr. Kelleher says. "We made the commitment to our patients to deliver the best treatment options available and invested in state-of-the-art technology. Most dermatology practices have only one laser available. Many use Intense Pulse Light (IPL) therapy, a

kind of very bright lamp, which is not selective. In my experience, IPL does many things, none of them as well as more selective lasers. What we accomplish with multiple laser therapy is much more effective, safer, and easier for our patients."

When a patient comes in to the Advanced Cosmetic Laser and Surgery Center, their skin is carefully evaluated. "I might look at an aging face, for instance," Dr. Kelleher says. "And I break it down into different components, with different treatment options."

The doctor may see sun damage, discoloration, age spots, flushed red skin, lines and wrinkles, spider veins, and rough texture. He then decides which laser treatment will work for each condition and combines their use in one treatment session.

"I might use four different lasers in one treatment session," Dr. Kelleher said. "Each specific laser treats a specific condition, and I can combine their use in one session—all at the same time."

Laser treatment may be used for hair removal, and even to treat acne. "Some of my happiest patients are those who have suffered with unwanted hair for years," Dr.

Kelleher said. "They can be rid of facial hair forever."

The advancement of laser treatment has meant better treatment for patients. "I've been in this field long enough to watch as the technology developed," Dr. Kelleher says. "It has been very gratifying as I watched the evolution of laser treatment. These less invasive procedures are much better for patients. It was very difficult for my patients to take 10 days out of their busy lives as their face healed from laser resurfacing. We made a conscious decision to invest in technology in order to provide the appropriate therapy for our patients."

For more information about multiple laser treatment options, contact Dr. Kelleher at the Advanced Cosmetic Laser and Surgery Center at 815-741-4343.