Lighten Up! Lasers Can Make Hair Today Gone Tomorrow

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If you want to bid unwanted hair goodbye, laser hair removal may be for you. Compared with tweezing, shaving and waxing, laser hair removal is an effective and almost permanent solution to the problem, Quality Health reports.

Laser hair removal works by flashing controlled beams of light on specific areas with unwanted hair. The melanin (a dark pigment) in hair draws the laser beams to the follicle, heating it to the point of destruction.

While laser therapy can be effective on anyone, it works best on those with coarse, dark hair and light skin. The laser focuses on hairs while leaving surrounding skin untouched. Each laser light pulse takes only a fraction of a second and can target an area of skin the size of a quarter. The best results occur on the face, leg, arm, underarm and bikini line.

For most patients, total hair removal occurs after four to seven sessions. But 10 to 20 percent of laser removal patients require additional therapy once or twice a year to get rid of regrown hair.

Laser therapy side effects include skin irritations such as crusting or scabbing and darkening or lightening of the skin. (Lightening of the skin is more common in people with darker skin.)

On rare occasions, laser hair removal may cause blistering, scarring or skin texture changes.

To avoid problems, Quality Health offers this advice to anyone going under the light beams:

Get Ready
About six weeks before treatment, limit the hair you pluck and wax. Sunbathing is also off limits as sun exposure can decrease the effectiveness of the treatment and increase risks.

Get Set
During treatment, a technician trims hair to just a few tiny millimeters above the skin. An operator adjusts the laser’s controls to the color, thickness and location of the hair as well as your skin color. Before the lasering, the technician applies a cooling gel to protect the outer layers of the

skin; and you may have to wear eye protection. Next, an operator beams a pulse of light at the treatment area. Depending on the target area, the lasering could last for a few minutes or up to several hours.

Go
After your laser treatment, your skin may look and feel sunburned for a few days. Wash the area with soap and water, avoid sun exposure for at least one week, and then wear sunscreen religiously going forward.

Expect to pay an average of $429 for laser hair removal treatment, reports the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. But keep in the mind the cost will vary depending on the kind of hair removal you're having done and where you live. (Besides the doctor's fee, also remember to get estimates for any additional monies you may have to spend in connection with the treatment.)

Finally, what's also important to remember is that everyone is different. To estimate how many treatments it would take to get rid of unwanted hair, how much it costs or if this procedure works for you, check with your doctor.

Click here to discover how your dermatologist may help solve your hair problems.

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