

Laser Service – Laser Treatment

Introduction

The Laser Service is part of the Department of Burns and Plastic Surgery. It covers the treatment of infantile haemangioma (strawberry birthmark), Capillary Malformation (portwine stain), other red skin marks, pigmented (brown) skin marks and scars. We also perform laser hair removal treatments for eligible patients.

We offer a range of treatments including medicines, surgery and laser treatments, as appropriate to the condition.

Guidance for Patients

Haemangioma patients:

If your baby is under 1 year of age we aim to see them within 6-8 weeks of referral. If the haemangioma is stopping their eye fully opening, or is affecting them feeding, or it is ulcerated (bleeding or oozing), then we deem this urgent, and would aim to see you within 2 weeks. Please contact us below if you haven't received an appointment within these timeframes.

If your baby is on oral propranolol treatment, we aim to give you a clinic appointment once per month in order to adjust the dose according to their weight and issue a new prescription. If you are booked for a telephone review, you can help by having their latest weight ready for the nurse. We usually keep going with treatment until the baby is 9-12 months old, but this sometimes continues longer if the doctor decides this is necessary. You can find our patient information leaflet on the website 'Propranolol for the treatment of infantile haemangioma'. Do make a list any questions that might arise and ask them at your appointment: this is more efficient for our staff than answering multiple emails, however if your question is very urgent, we are happy to help when we can.

It is safe to allow your baby to do normal activities including swimming as long as the skin isn't broken.

It is normal for the haemangioma to appear a bit larger if your child is hot, crying has been very active or has a viral infection. This is due to a general increase in blood flow. If it seems to be continuing to grow over a period of weeks, then let us know. It can be helpful to take a photograph once a week on your phone when your child is quiet and resting so that you have something to compare to.

If your child has recently stopped treatment for their haemangioma, you may notice a slight darkening of the haemangioma or a mild swelling. It is safe to leave this a few weeks to see if this is temporary. If it continues to get larger or more red then let us know and we will arrange a review.

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If your child is older than a year, we aim to see them again around the age of 3-4 years to discuss whether they would benefit from any other treatment. Until this time, the haemangioma will be naturally shrinking and becoming paler, though this can be a slow process. There is nothing special that needs to be done to look after the haemangioma during this time. Keeping it well moisturised and protecting your child's skin from the sun is good general advice.

Laser Treatment patients

We have a large number of patients waiting for laser treatments currently, and we are grateful for your patience while we manage this.

If you are 16 years or over and would like to ask about being transferred to the adult service, then please do get in touch. Our local adult laser service is run from Whiston/St Helen's Hospitals.

If you are a new patient and have been referred to us for Laser Hair Removal, we need to ensure that you are eligible for this before we can accept you for treatment. This may mean that your referring doctor needs to complete an Independent Funding Request (IFR).

If your condition is getting worse or you are experiencing new symptoms (e.g. bleeding, scabbing, growth of a lump) or you are in pain with your condition, then please get in touch. If you have a burn scar that is getting thicker or is very itchy, then please also let us know.

We would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to try to reduce the waiting times during this challenging time. If you wish to make a complaint, we would be grateful if you could direct this to the Patient Advice Liaison Service. Our clinical staff are working hard to offer a safe and effective treatment experience for each of their patients and cannot be expected to tolerate aggressive behaviour.

Surgery patients

If you have had surgery and have a problem with the wound, then please get in touch. We usually use dissolving stitches and glue on the surface. As the stitches dissolve, they can form a small lump within the scar that can be sore for a few weeks. This does not usually require any treatment.

If there is any redness spreading from the edges of the wound, then this can be a sign of a wound infection, particularly if your child feels unwell or has a temperature. If this is the case then they need to see a doctor. Please attend your local walk-in centre, GP or A&E, or phone the hospital to see if an appointment can be given the same day.

Once the wound has healed, often the scar can become red and lumpy after a few weeks. This can be managed by massaging the scar with some unfragranced moisturising cream. This usually settles over the next few months. If the lumpiness continues to get worse, then let us know.

If you are waiting for the results of a biopsy, this can often take 4-6 weeks to come back to us. We usually discuss this with you when you come to your follow-up appointment. Please get in touch if it is longer than this and you do not have a planned outpatient appointment coming up.

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Contact Us

Please contact the Laser Service on 0151 252 5510 Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. If you need urgent assistance outside of these hours, please contact 111 or 999 in an emergency.