

# IPL hair removal

With all the fuss about photorejuvenation, many have forgotten that the original function of Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) was hair removal. Sophie Gordon talks to Sydney cosmetic physician **Dr Samuel Seit** about long-term depilation.

## 5 benefits of IPL hair removal

- 1 Large surface areas may be treated at one time
- 2 Less chance of scarring and pigmentation change
- 3 Less pain compared to waxing and laser
- 4 Combines the speed of shaving with the lasting results of electrolysis
- 5 No 'down time' so you can go straight back to work after your treatment.

Excess body hair has always been a costly and time-consuming cosmetic nuisance for many women and some men. Today there are long-lasting alternatives to painful waxing and exhausting electrolysis.

Sydney cosmetic physician Dr Samuel Seit uses IPL to remove unwanted facial and body hair – long term. “When you have a wax, you wipe off exposed hairs but you are not getting rid of the stem cells that regenerate hair,” he explains. “IPL works on the actively growing hair.”

The pigments in the hair follicle absorb the energy of IPL, resulting in rapid heating of the hair bulb. This disables the follicle so it cannot support any more hair growth. Hair grows in three stages – active, shedding and resting. IPL can only kill hair that is in the active growth stage. For this reason, three to five treatments are usually required.

"You will see results after the first IPL treatment because you have wiped out any hair in its actively growing phase immediately. After six weeks, any hair that was in its resting phase during the first treatment will become active and can then be wiped out with a second IPL treatment," says Seit.

Because it is the pigments in the hair follicle that absorb the light, IPL works best on people who have a lot of melanin (pigment) in their hair (brunettes and redheads) and is not as effective on fair-haired people (white blondes).

The most commonly treated areas for women are the bikini line and armpits. Dr Seit also does the shoulders, chests and backs of many male clients. "Some women require their legs done, but because the surface area is so large, legs can be quite expensive. Post-menopausal women often have a lot of hair growing on their chin and upper lip that they want to remove," says Dr Seit.

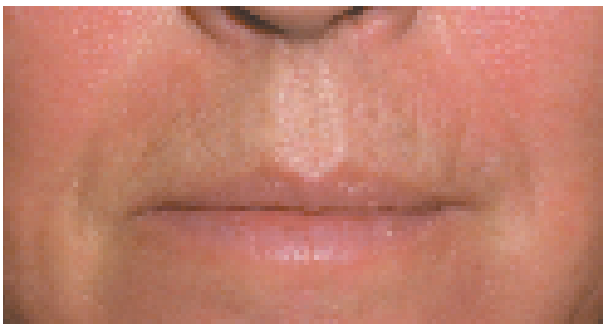
One IPL bikini line treatment takes about half an hour while a whole back takes up to an hour and a half. Prior to treatment, existing hair is shaved. "You don't pulse onto long hair. It needs to be shaven down first otherwise the hair will fry and burn the skin," notes Dr Seit. "Then the area needs to be cooled down using either cold gel or a cold pack."

Does it hurt? "People who have had laser done tell me IPL hurts a lot less than laser. It feels like the hot snap of a rubber band," says Dr Seit.

Dr Seit says there are few people who would be ineligible for IPL treatments. However, people who have epilepsy can be affected by the flashing lights so are advised to steer clear, just in case. Unlike laser, it is quite safe to do IPL on darker skinned people. "With lasers you are more likely to get inflammatory hyper-pigmentation which is much less likely with IPL," says Dr Seit. **acsm**



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