

Laser Hair Removal Frequently Asked Questions

About Laser Hair Removal:

1. How does laser hair removal work?
2. How is the Sciton Profile™ laser different from other lasers?
3. Does laser hair removal hurt?
4. What areas of the body can be treated with laser hair removal?
5. Advantage of laser hair removal over other treatments for hair removal?
6. Why should I get laser hair removal done?

Who can be treated:

7. Can all skin colours be treated?
8. Can tanned skin be treated?
9. Can all hair colours be treated?
10. Am I a good candidate for laser hair removal?
11. What if I have had laser treatments in the past?

Risks to be considered:

12. What risks does laser hair removal have?
13. What happens to moles, freckles, or tattoos in the area to be treated?

What results can be expected:

14. Is laser hair removal permanent?
15. Will all my hair be gone in the treatment area after one laser treatment?
16. Will all my hair be gone in the treatment area after completing all the laser treatment sessions?
17. How fast will hair grow back (if it does)?
18. Why do I need to get 5 – 8 treatments?

Cost:

19. How much does it cost?
20. Is laser hair removal covered by insurance or Manitoba Health?
21. Can laser hair removal be used as a tax deduction?

Diseases that cause hair growth problems:

22. What is Unwanted Female Facial Hair?
23. What is Hirsutism?
24. What is Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)?
25. What is Hypertrichosis?
26. What is Pseudofolliculitis barbae (razor rash)?
27. What are hormone related hair disorders?
28. What is menopause?
29. What are medication related hair disorders?

How to prepare for laser hair removal:

30. How can I get the best benefit for my laser hair treatment?
31. What is a “test area”?
32. How does tanning or “fake tanning” affect laser treatments?
33. What happens at the initial Consultation Appointment?
34. What happens on laser treatment day?
35. What happens after the treatment?

Pre-Treatment and Post-Treatment Instructions:

- 36. Pre-treatment instructions
- 37. Post-treatment instructions
- 38. Follow-up timeline

About Laser Hair Removal:

1. How does laser hair removal work?

Laser hair removal is a safe and effective way of removing undesired hair from the body. Laser hair removal works by directing a focused infrared light pulse through the skin to where it heats up and destroys hair follicles.

Hair grows in cycles:

Hair grows out from hair follicles that are found throughout the outer layer of the skin. There are three phases of hair growth. The growing phase (called anagen) is when hair is actively being produced. Laser destruction of the follicle works for hair in the growing phase. Hair may then go from the actively growing phase into a brief changing stage (called catagen) where the bottom of the follicle is absorbed into the body. Lastly, the hair follicle enters the resting phase (called telogen) where no active hair growth occurs. Hairs that remain in the follicle may eventually fall out or get pushed out by a new hair growing when the hair follicles enter the growing phase again.

The Sciton Profile™ laser sends a brief pulse of concentrated light into the skin where it is absorbed by hair pigment and this in turn heats and destroys the hair follicle. Once the follicle is destroyed, the hair will fall out and no new hair will grow from the destroyed follicle. The laser selectively destroys the hair root (follicle) without damaging other sensitive pores and other structures in the skin. If the hair follicle is not heated up enough, it might just “stun” the hair follicle and the hair might start growing again.

The Sciton Profile™ laser uses a Nd:YAG 1064 wavelength laser that penetrates into the deeper areas of the upper skin layer where the hair follicles are. When the laser reaches the deeper follicles, this tends to destroy more hair follicles and avoids just stunning them.

Sometimes hairs come out right after the laser pulse treatment but in most cases, the hair gradually works itself out of the pore over the next 2-3 weeks. Often the hair appears to still be growing when in fact the hair is just slowly being pushed out of the destroyed hair follicle.

During treatment, a clear cool glass plate is placed over the skin where the laser work is done. This helps to protect the surface of the skin before, during, and after the laser destroys the deeper lying hair follicles.

In comparison to electrolysis which destroys one hair at a time, the Sciton Profile™ laser covers a larger area by sending a wide laser beam through the skin, effectively treating many hair follicles at once. The Sciton Profile™ laser also has an advantage over other lasers in that within a very short time it can cover a much larger area by using a computerized program to rapidly fire out laser pulses that are placed side-by-side over the selected skin area.

Hair over the entire body can be treated with the Sciton Profile™ laser. Larger areas such as the back, chest, arms, shoulders, legs, and face can be treated. The laser can also be customized to treat sensitive areas such as the upper lip, nipples and bikini area with minimal discomfort. Likewise, the laser is tailored to treat you according to your skin type and colour, your hair texture, and where it is found on the body.

The Sciton Profile™ laser is very effective in for lighter skin types but is also the best choice to treat darker skin types. Additionally, the ability to safely treat sun-tanned skin makes this the treatment of choice for active individuals.

The Sciton Profile™ laser is safe, quick, and effective for hair removal and can be done with minimal discomfort. Take advantage of proven technology of laser hair removal to rid yourself of unwanted body hair.

2. How is the Sciton Profile™ laser different from other lasers?

Many lasers have been used to remove unwanted hair and they have different success rates.

Other lasers are used for hair removal:

- Intense pulsed light – tend to stun hair follicles instead of killing them
- Ruby 694 nm laser (Epilaser, Epitouch, Chromos)
- Alexandrite 755 nm (Epitouch ALEX, Photogential LIPR, GentleLASE)
- Diode 800-810 nm (LightSheer, Apex).

The disadvantage of these light systems is that they have a shorter wavelength that can only penetrate into the first few millimeters of skin. Unfortunately, this light energy does not reach most hair roots which are found deeper in the skin. The amount of energy that does reach the hair roots often can only stun the hairs into a resting cycle. Thus the hair reduction is temporary because the hair follicles eventually recover and start producing hairs again.

Additionally, shorter wavelength lasers are difficult and may be dangerous to use on darker skinned or tanned skin. This is because the pigment within the skin (melanin) that gives it the darker colour can be heated up and cause skin disfiguration.

The Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser is different in many ways from these older and shorter wavelength lasers. The 1064 laser penetrates deeper into the skin where the

hair follicles are and is far more effective in destroying the active hair follicles, giving permanent reduction of hair growth. Additionally, darker skinned individuals can be safely treated with the 1064 laser because energy reaches deeper into the skin where it can work to rid hair but not destroy the surface skin. Lastly, the Sciton Profile™ laser can be customized for each individual, even if there has been changes in the pigment of the skin (e.g., tan) or hair texture (becomes finer). Many of the older lasers could not be customized in this fashion.

The Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser differs from other 1064 nm lasers in two main ways:

- (1) The cooling plate window is applied before, **during**, and after the treatment which allows for maximum comfort and cooling of the surface skin while allowing the laser to still work at destroying deeper hair follicles.
- (2) The laser has been formatted to **cover a larger area of skin at once** or can be used to cover a small area as needed. This flexibility allows you to get your laser hair removal done quicker.

3. Does laser hair removal hurt?

Treatment with the Sciton Profile™ laser has been commonly described as a small pinprick or like an elastic band snapping against the skin. The procedure is usually done with minimal discomfort. However, certain areas of the body tend to be more sensitive (e.g., upper lip, neck, genital areas). Discomfort from the Sciton Profile™ laser is reduced by application of the cooling window on the skin before, during, and after the laser treatment. Additionally, the laser parameters can be quickly adjusted by the operator between laser pulses if they are causing too much discomfort.

Often people describe their first laser treatment as being the most uncomfortable with subsequent treatments being less of a discomfort.

The more dense or thick your hair is, the more uncomfortable it may be. Laser hair removal works by heating up the pigment in the hair follicle. If you have many hairs in a smaller area, a larger amount of heat is absorbed. By applying the cooling window on the skin before, during, and after the laser treatment, discomfort is minimized.

Freshly shaved skin can be more sensitive. Therefore it is a good idea to shave the area at least a couple hours prior to the treatment. Better yet, shave the night before. Laser hair removal does not require any length of hair to be protruding from the skin.

If you shave the area ahead of time, then we are able to laser the area in exactly the way you desire. If you do not shave the area and the hair is too long to laser, we can remove your hair at our clinic but this has an additional cost.

Some areas of the body are generally more sensitive than others. For instance, the upper lip, neck, and pubic hair area are more sensitive than the legs or back for most people. However, many people have the sensitive areas lasered and feel little or no discomfort.

In comparison to waxing, sugaring, electrolysis, and some other laser treatments, the Sciton Profile™ laser is reported to cause less discomfort.

For sensitive areas, our staff may sometimes also apply cooling gel pads before or after treatment, in addition to the excellent cooling provided by the Profile™ cooling window during treatment.

EMLA™ cream has been occasionally used in very sensitive areas. EMLA™ cream is a topical anaesthetic (freezing or numbing) that can be bought over the counter at Laser Away. It is applied 1 hour prior to the procedure over the target area. We remove all creams such as EMLA™ prior to treatment in order to get the best laser results.

Some people will take 1 – 2 acetaminophen 325mg or 500mg (a.k.a Tylenol) about 2 hours prior to treatment. Alternatively, some people take 200 – 400mg Ibuprofen (a.k.a Advil, Motrin) 2 hours prior to treatment.

To reduce your discomfort you should follow the following TIPS:

- Read the FAQs ahead of time
- Have your questions answered prior to getting any laser treatments
- Shave the targeted area the night before or at least 2 hours prior to treatment
- Pamper yourself the day of treatment – eat an adequate meal, get good sleep, drink plenty of fluids, plan a break or treat for yourself afterwards
- Take an acetaminophen or ibuprofen prior to treatment if you desire (optional)
- Use EMLA™ cream over the sensitive area 2 hours prior to treatment. Do this after you have discussed this option with our staff.
- Tell the Laser operator if you are feeling any pain or excessive discomfort
- We want to do this “for you, not to you”

4. What areas of the body can be treated with laser hair removal?

Any part of the body can be treated with the Sciton Profile™ laser to remove hair. The most common areas treated for both men and women are:

In women – upper lip, chin, bikini line, arms, legs, and underarms.

In men – shoulders, back, beard/neck area.

Hair removal from around the eyes and eyebrows are not done by our clinic at this time.

5. Advantages of laser hair removal over other treatments for hair removal?

The major advantages of laser hair removal are:

- Quick, gentle hair removal that has long lasting results

- Can treat larger areas with less discomfort than with electrolysis, sugaring, waxing, or tweezing
- Works on any area of the body

Compared to Electrolysis:

Electrolysis works by inserting a needle into each hair follicle. The needle tip is pushed towards the hair root and then the operator sends a small electrical pulse, thus destroying the hair follicle. The hair is then removed.

Electrolysis is like mowing grass one blade at a time. However, electrolysis can be an excellent choice for hair removal in these cases:

- you wish to remove only a few hairs
- in areas where the laser is more difficult to use such as near the eyes, ears, and nose
- for people with white and pale blonde hair. Laser light needs pigment (darker colour) to heat up and destroy hair follicles.

Sometimes electrolysis can complement laser hair removal. Such is the case in some individuals who have both dark and white hairs. The laser effectively removes the darker hairs and the remaining few white hairs are then removed by electrolysis.

The main advantages of laser hair removal over electrolysis is that it is faster, covers a larger area, and can reach active hairs that are growing but might not have reached the skin surface yet.

Compared to Waxing, Sugaring, or Plucking:

These methods of hair removal require you to first grow out your hair to then have it painfully pulled out. This method does not destroy the hair follicle so it can be expected to grow back. In fact, the body often responds to this type of forceful hair removal by growing more hairs, thicker hairs, or stronger hairs that are harder to pull out. These methods need to be repeated as often as the hair grows.

These methods also require you to let your hair grow out before treatment. This is not usually desirable if you wish to keep your skin smooth.

In contrast, laser hair removal destroys the hair follicles, thus reducing the hair growth. After several sessions of hair removal, most individuals have permanent hair reduction and may have very little to no hair growth. Also, in between laser hair removal visits, a person can shave to keep the skin nice and smooth. There is no need to grow your hair out for laser hair removal.

Compared to Depilatory creams such as Neet™, Nair™, and Vaniqa™:

These creams remove the hair but the follicles survive. Hair regrows in 1-4 weeks and the treatments need to be repeated often.

Laser hair removal on the other hand can provide permanent hair reduction.

6. Why should I get laser hair removal done?

If you are considering laser hair removal, you have already identified an area of your body that you wish to have less hair. You should choose to have laser hair removal done once you have considered the following:

- Laser hair removal may provide permanent hair reduction.
 - Is this what you desire?
 - Is it fashionable at the time or lasting change you desire?
 - Am I considering my appearance in the future?
 - For example: a man might think twice before having a moustache or bearded area treated in case they may wish to grow face hair in future years.
- Laser hair removal can save you time.
 - Most people get significant permanent hair reduction – saving time over the previous hair removal methods of tweezing, shaving, waxing, or sugaring. Also less time wasted on bleaching, applying cover-up, or otherwise concealing unwanted hair.
 - Laser hair treatments can be done quickly and gently
- You should only have laser hair removal if **you** desire it!
 - Like everything in life, you should make decisions because they are your decisions. If you are only making changes for somebody else, you may end up regretting it.
 - To what extent are you bothered by your facial hair? Other hairy areas?
 - How much does your unwanted facial or other hair make you feel uncomfortable in social situations, at work or school, or in intimate situations?

Who can be treated:

7. Can all skin colours be treated?

Yes. All skin types I through VI can be treated. Skin type I is very fair, always burns in the sun, never tans, and often has blue eyes and blonde hair. On the other side of the spectrum is Skin type VI which is darker skin, never burns in the sun and often has dark hair and eyes.

Unlike many older style lasers that could only treat the most fair skin types, the Sciton Profile™ laser can penetrate deep in the skin to destroy the hair follicle This can usually be done without disturbing the darker skin's natural colour or causing it to heat to much. The Sciton Profile™ laser can be adjusted for any skin type.

8. Can tanned skin be treated?

Yes. The Sciton Profile™ laser can be adjusted to treat tanned skin effectively and safely.

However, for the best results, we suggest that you avoid sun exposure, tanning beds, and tanning creams for 3 weeks prior to treatment. Sunless tanning lotions should also be avoided for 3 weeks prior to treatment.

If you have a new tan, have been exposed to the sun in the last three weeks, or have used a tanning product, please inform us before you laser. This allows us to adjust the treatment regimen accordingly to best laser your darker skin. If you've recently tanned, you may now require additional treatment sessions to achieve the optimal hair removal.

Occasionally we may need to cancel & reschedule the treatment if you have had recent sun exposure.

If it is avoidable, we suggest that you do not tan, use tanning product, or expose yourself excessively to the sun for the three weeks leading up to your laser hair removal. Lighter coloured skin with darker hairs responds the best to laser energy.

9. Can all hair colours be treated?

No. White hair does not respond to laser hair removal treatment.

The Sciton Profile™ laser works by focusing light energy on the pigment in the hair root. Therefore **lasers work best on black or brown hair**. Red, blonde, or light-coloured red hair may require additional treatments and may not respond completely.

White hair and grey hair has lost most of its pigment so the laser cannot heat up and destroy the hair follicle. Laser away your hair before it turns white!

Bleached, coloured, and dyed hairs can be treated by the laser. The laser targets the natural hair colour that is protected in the hair follicle. So even if you are bleached blonde, your roots may be dark and respond to laser hair removal.

10. Am I a good candidate for laser hair removal?

Laser hair removal is an effective and gentle way to remove undesired hair. The Sciton Profile™ laser can be used to treat people of all skin colours. Older lasers were unable to treat darkly pigmented skin on people without risking damage to the skin. However, the Sciton Profile™ laser has adjustable energy to allow treatment of all skin types.

It is important to know that naturally blonde hair, light red hair, and white hair types cannot be properly treated with the laser. Laser hair removal relies on pigment within the hair root in order to destroy the follicle. These hair types do not contain enough pigment to get a proper treatment.

11. What if I have had laser treatments in the past?

The Sciton Profile™ laser can be used on people that have had laser treatments in the past with older style lasers or different wavelength lasers (e.g., ruby, alexandrite, Epilight™). If a person has not achieved satisfactory hair reduction with other laser

systems, the Sciton Profile™ may be able to provide improved results, often with fewer treatments.

Risks to be considered:

12. What risks does laser hair removal have?

After you have had laser hair removal completed, you may experience short-term reddening and irritation (swelling) of the treated area. This usually lasts less than 2-3 hours but occasionally can last for a few days.

The Sciton Profile™ laser is less likely than older lasers to cause longer-term irritation, redness, blistering or pigmentation changes.

However, studies and experience with the laser technology have shown the following potential complications and side effects:

- Chance of developing hypo- (lighter) or hyper-pigmentation (darker) in the treated area. Fortunately this is not common but some studies have shown it to happen in 10-20% of people. This is infrequently a cosmetic problem and it usually resolves after several months.
- Blistering, crusting, or bruising over treated area
- Freckles and other brown spots may lighten and disappear
- Pimples
- Redness and swelling
- Newer reports now reveal an incidence of increased growth of hair in certain treated areas.

The Sciton Profile™ laser does not cause skin cancer.

In contrast to waxing, sugaring, and tweezing/plucking hairs, laser hair removal does not make the hair grow back thicker, darker, or quicker.

After you are treated with the Sciton Profile™ laser, there will usually be less hair and delayed hair growth. When the hair does grow back, there is often less of it and it is finer and lighter coloured.

13. What happens to moles, freckles, or tattoos in the area to be treated?

It all depends on the size of the mole or freckle and how dark it is pigmented. For smaller freckles and moles, we usually do not need to take any special precautions. However, large and dark moles or freckles may absorb more of the laser light than the surrounding skin. For this reason, we may need to reduce the settings on the laser. Our doctors or trained laser technician can make these adjustments as needed.

We prefer to not treat hair over tattoos because the pigments in the tattoo may absorb the laser light and cause fading of the tattoo, discomfort, or a burn.

14. Is laser hair removal permanent?

There is NO hair removal method that can guarantee permanent hair removal.

Now that you know the natural cycles of hair growth (see Question 1), you will know that at any time, some hair follicles may be dormant or sleeping while you are destroying the other hair follicles with the laser. The dormant follicles may eventually “wake up” and start growing a hair again.

The best description of laser hair removal is “long-term hair reduction”. For most people, the total amount of hair can be reduced significantly after 5-8 treatments. At any treatment, about 20% of the hair follicles may be destroyed. This means that after 5-8 treatment sessions, hair is reduced by 70 – 90%. The hair that grows afterwards is often lighter coloured, finer, and less dense.

Most people are quite pleased with the improvement. After treatment(s), most men and women are very happy to rarely use their razor and avoid uncomfortable waxing/sugaring/and plucking.

Significant long-term hair reduction can be achieved for most people but it usually requires 5-8 treatment sessions in order to destroy the majority of hair follicles in the area. For most people, there is a considerable reduction in the amount of hair, the thickness in the hair, and a lightening of the hair colour. This reduction will often last for many years.

It is very important for you to consider the area that you wish to remove unwanted hair. Once the hair follicles are destroyed, they may never come back to life. Is this an area that you wish to remain hairless for a long time. What if hairy armpits come back into fashion? Will this be a problem?

Lasers have only been used for hair removal widely over the last 12 years so we cannot guarantee hair reduction in the next 20 years. We know that long-term hair reduction can be expected to last 2 years or longer but some of the people who had laser hair removal 10 years ago still enjoy significant hair reduction.

What results can be expected:

15. Will all my hair be gone in the treatment area after one laser treatment?

No, but there will be reduction of the number of hairs in the area after only one treatment. At any treatment, about 20% of the hair follicles may be destroyed. Some hair follicles will survive because they are in the dormant stage, other follicles may only be “stunned” the first time around, and other follicles will be destroyed.

For most people, the total amount of hair can be reduced significantly after 5-8 treatments. This means that after 5-8 treatment sessions, hair is reduced by 70 – 90%. The hair that grows afterwards is often lighter coloured, finer, and less dense.

16. Will all my hair be gone in the treatment area after completing all the laser treatment sessions?

Most of the hair will be gone after 5-8 treatments in the desired area. Most people will experience 70-90% reduction in hair in the area that has had several laser treatments. Additionally, most people can expect that the remaining fewer hairs may be thinner and lighter coloured. You should not expect to be completely “hair free.”

Often we can assess the area 6 months after the final treatment session. The regrowth of hair usually stabilizes within this time and what you see as far as hair growth is usually what you can expect for the next 1-2 years.

17. How fast will hair grow back (if it does)?

The Sciton Profile™ laser effectively destroys active growing hairs by heating the pigment in the hair root and destroying the surrounding follicle. If there is not enough pigment in the hair root to absorb and transmit the energy from the laser, then the follicle may only be “stunned” rather than destroyed. Hair falls out from treated area in 1-3 weeks afterwards from both stunned and destroyed follicles.

After one treatment, hair growth may not be present for 2-4 months afterwards in the treated area. However, the “stunned” hair follicles will recover and some dormant (or sleeping) hair follicles will wake up and become active. Active hair growth occurs from these follicles. The dormant hair follicles cannot be destroyed by the laser because they contain no hair and no pigment to be energized by the laser.

After 5-8 laser treatments, most hairs are destroyed and very little or no active hair regrowth may occur for many years. However, some people will have some hair growth despite the lasering and may desire a further laser session to remove any new or unwanted hair.

Usually hairs that regrow after laser treatment are finer and lighter colour. These are usually less noticeable and may be less of a cosmetic problem.

18. Why do I need to get 5 - 8 treatments?

Laser hair removal works by heating up actively growing hair follicles. The laser heats up the pigment in the hair, which is then transmitted into the hair follicles and this destroys them.

When the hair follicle is in the dormant (sleeping) phase, the hair follicle is empty. Since there is no pigment to heat up, no laser energy can be transmitted to the hair follicle.

Later, when the hair follicle “wakes” up and becomes active again, the hair starts growing.

The Sciton Profile™ laser has a 1064nm wavelength light that penetrates to the skin depth where most follicles lay. However, even the Sciton Profile™ laser may only “stun” hair follicles from time to time. Sometimes this occurs because the patient is only able to tolerate a certain amount of energy, which may not be enough to destroy the hair follicle. The “stunned” follicles will eventually recover and start growing hairs in them again.

At any given time, only about 20% of the hair follicles are destroyed with a laser treatment. Lots of hairs may be actively growing but some have lighter coloured or finer hairs that will not absorb enough energy to destroy the follicle.

Laser therapy can sometimes trigger fine vellus hairs (peach fuzz) to develop into darker hairs. Although the vellus hairs are not well treated by the laser, the darker hairs that develop can be well treated.

To achieve a significant amount of hair reduction, most people will need to have 5-8 sessions of laser hair removal to destroy a majority of the hair follicles. Generally the lips or face may require fewer treatments (4 - 6) in comparison to areas such as the back or arms (5 - 8).

Depending on what you desire, some people are happy with the shorter term reduction of laser hair removal. For example, some women (and men) may wish to have hair reduction of their bikini area prior to a winter vacation or prior to the summer. The short term loss of hairs can last 2-4 months for some people. Others wish to have treatments regularly until the hair is significantly reduced so that they rarely have to shave or remove their undesired hair.

The number of treatment sessions required is quite individual and depends on multiple factors such as:

- How much hair you wish to rid yourself of
- Hair colour – lighter coloured hair may need more treatments
- Skin colour – darker skin may require more treatments
- Area treated – some thicker hair areas of skin may require more treatments
- Hormone status
- Age
- Weight – obesity can increase hair growth
- Medications – some can increase hair growth

After significant hair reduction has been achieved, many people will get some hairs growing that continue to be an annoyance. We may suggest a “touch-up” if they are smaller areas. These are often arranged at a reasonable price.

If you have already had some laser hair removal treatments by another type of laser, you may not require as many treatments with the Sciton Profile™ laser.

A person may have as many laser treatments as they wish. There are no safety limits to this laser type. The Sciton Profile™ laser does not cause skin cancer.

Cost:

19. How much does it cost?

Fees for laser hair removal are quite affordable. You will find our standard fee list attached including the body area that hair will be removed from.

Fees are charged per treatment session, plus GST. Fees can be paid at the time of treatment in one of these easy to pay methods: VISA, Mastercard, American Express, CASH, or Interac. No cheques please.

Each laser hair removal client is provided with an initial FREE consultation with our laser hair technician. Consultation appointments can be arranged in a timely manner. Treatment can be arranged for the same day as the consultation if there is a time slot to accommodate you. Please mention this to us when you call so we can best meet your needs and schedule.

Arrange your FREE laser hair removal consultation by calling us at: (204) 253-2929 or (204) 253-AWAY.

Call us. Our expert-trained staff would be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding laser hair removal. Our knowledgeable staff have all experienced Sciton Profile™ laser hair removal themselves and so they speak from experience.

No referral is required.

20. Is laser hair removal covered by insurance or Manitoba Health?

Manitoba health does not pay for laser hair removal or for the laser hair removal consultation.

Unfortunately, most private insurers do not cover you for cosmetic procedures such as laser hair removal.

Insurance companies may cover laser hair removal for certain medical conditions where a person has hirsutism, drug-related hypertrichosis, congenital hypertrichosis, pseudofolliculitis, trans-sexual states, or skin grafts. Consult your insurance carrier for

more information. We do charge to complete any additional paperwork or forms that are required by your insurance company for reimbursement.

21. Can laser hair removal be used as a tax deduction?

Save your receipts. Since 2010, Revenue Canada changed what cosmetic services are eligible for tax deduction. In order to claim laser hair removal on your income tax, you must meet the government's requirements:

- Hair removal treatments must be prescribed by a doctor for medical purposes (e.g., infections from ingrown hairs, unwanted hair causes considerable mental or physical discomfort or pain, hirsutism);
- Hair removal treatments must be performed at a medical practitioner's office or in hospital.

Medical tax deductions only allow you to claim amounts in excess of 3% of your net taxable income.

Diseases that cause hair growth problems:

22. What is Unwanted Female Facial Hair?

Unwanted female facial hair is any growth of hair on the face that is more dense (more of it), coarser (thicker), or longer than what is normally expected for another woman of the same age and race. Up to 2 million Canadian women experience this problem and regularly remove facial hair up to once per week.

23. What is Hirsutism?

Hirsutism is excessive growth of dark, thick hair on a woman's body in a male-like pattern. This hair growth is found in the androgen (testosterone) dependent areas of the woman's body and includes areas such as the face, neck, chest, abdomen, back, and inner thighs. Hirsutism is a common problem and affects up to 8% of all women.

Women from some ethnic groups tend to have more body hair than others. This does not mean that they have hirsutism. However they may still wish to have less hair in some areas and the Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser can treat all skin colours.

Hirsutism can occur for many reasons including: hormonal disorders, some medications, and some rare diseases. By far the most common reason for hirsutism in women is polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS).

24. What is Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)?

Polycystic ovarian syndrome occurs when a woman's hormones aren't working in the normal way, and the ovaries make too many eggs. The eggs turn into cysts, or fluid filled bubbles.

There are many symptoms that occur with PCOS. Commonly, a woman may have irregular menstrual periods and may have trouble getting pregnant. Most women with PCOS have extra hair growth on the face, chest, lower abdomen, and inner thigh area. Acne and obesity are also common with PCOS.

Doctors are unsure of the cause of PCOS but there may be some treatments that will help with symptoms. The Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser can be used to remove undesired hair.

25. What is Hypertrichosis?

Hypertrichosis is excessive hair growth in areas of the body that are not androgen-dependent. This type of excess hair growth is not in a male-distribution. Hypertrichosis may be genetic or may be related to a disease state or medication that you are taking.

The unwanted hair in hypertrichosis may sometimes improve after the disease is treated or the medication is removed. However, in cases of simple genetic hypertrichosis or if the medication must be continued, laser hair removal may help.

26. What is Pseudofolliculitis barbae (razor rash)?

Pseudofolliculitis barbae (PFB) has also been called razor rash or shaving bumps. It is commonly seen with men along the neck region. Women may get PFB along the bikini area or armpits where they may frequently shave.

Essentially PFB is caused by irritation of the hair follicles by the shaving and the hairs that grow up afterwards become either ingrown or irritate the follicle as they grow out. The resulting rash can be uncomfortable or embarrassing for some men and women.

If you are a man in the military, you are likely required to remain clean shaven daily. If you have PFB this can be difficult as it cannot heal when daily shaving occurs. Additionally, a gas mask may not make a tight seal on your neck if you have PFB.

Fortunately, the Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser can be used to help treat PFB. The laser permanently reduces the number of hair follicles and growing hairs in the area, so that there is often less need to shave the area and less follicle irritation resulting in PFB. After 5-8 laser treatments, most men will achieve a significant improvement in their razor rash. Most often we would only need to treat the neck area so that a beard and facial hair can still be grown.

For women with PFB, the laser hair reduction reduces the need to shave and thus there is less irritation in the area.

27. What are hormone related hair disorders?

Most hormone related hair growth occurs because of an excess of the male-hormone androgen. Women do produce some androgen in their body, however when this hormone level is too high, it can stimulate male-pattern hair growth.

The most common hormone related hair growth in women is caused by polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). Rarely, androgen hormone excess is caused by an adrenal gland disorder or insulin disorder. And sometimes a woman just makes more androgen, and there is no medical problem present (this is called “idiopathic”).

For both PCOS and the normal androgen excess, laser hair treatment provides an excellent way to reduce the undesired hair growth.

28. What about menopause?

As a woman enters menopause, their hormones can fluctuate. This change of life eventually leads to reduces levels of the female hormones circulating in their body. Amongst the many changes that women experience, many will have more facial hair growth.

Undesired facial hair can be well treated with laser hair removal. However, if your hair is changing colour to white, we may not be able to use the laser to remove the hair. Laser hair removal depends on pigment in the natural hair root to destroy the hair follicle. White hair is without pigment and therefore cannot be removed by the laser.

We can evaluate your natural hair growth to see if you would be able to get laser hair removal done. Don't delay, laser today.

29. What are medication related hair disorders?

Some medications have a side effect of stimulating hair growth in areas that you may not desire hair to grow. Medications can cause hirsutism (undesired hair in a male-pattern) or hypertrichosis (excess hair growth that is not in a male-hair distribution).

Some medications that may cause hirsutism include:

- Anabolic steroids
- Danazol (Cyclomen)
- Metoclopramide (Maxeran)
- Methyldopa (Aldomet)
- Phenothiazines
- Progestins
- Testosterone.

Some medications that may cause hypertrichosis include:

- Cyclosporine (Neoral)
- Diazoxide (Hyperstat or Proglycem)
- Hydrocortisone
- Minoxidil (Rogaine or Loniten)
- Penicillamine (Cuprimine)
- Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- Psoralens
- Streptomycin.

How to prepare for laser hair removal:

30. How can I get the best benefit for my laser hair treatment?

Everyone wants to get the maximum benefit for the least cost. In laser hair treatment this translates into the most hair removed for the longest time for the least number of treatment sessions.

To begin it is important to know that laser hair removal may not work for 10-20% of the population. We usually will know this after the second treatment. Also, if you review the section about how the laser works and how hair grows in cycles, then you will understand that it usually takes several sessions to get the majority of hairs removed.

To get the most follicles destroyed in one laser session, you should follow the following guidelines:

(1) Avoid waxing, sugaring, tweezing hairs, electrolysis, or EpiLady treatments

The laser needs to heat up an actively growing hair that is still in the hair follicle. These methods pull the hair out by the root and leaves the follicle empty but able to still grow more hair. Best bet is to avoid these hair removal methods for **at least 6 weeks prior** to your laser hair treatment.

You can have a laser hair treatment done within 6 weeks of waxing, sugaring, tweezing, electrolysis, or EpiLady but the results are not as good. This is because many of the hair roots will be already removed and the laser will not be able to target all of the actively growing hair follicles.

(2) Avoid tanning

The Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser can effectively treat all skin types and can be adjusted if you have tanned to a different skin colour. However, the most effective laser treatment occurs in people with light coloured skin and darker hairs.

This means that **we can do laser hair removal on tanned people** but if you want to get the most bang for your buck, avoid tanning (artificial or real) until you are completed all your laser sessions. Tanning lotions and creams artificially colour your skin and this has the same effects with the laser as does a real tan.

Best bet is to try and avoid tanning or using fake tanning lotions for at least 6 weeks prior to your laser hair treatment. If you do have a recent tan, please inform us when you come in for your laser session so we can adjust the laser to get the best results.

We advise that you do not tan for a few weeks after laser treatment to reduce the chance that your tan may come out uneven. We recommend sunscreen with an SPF of 45-60 directly after laser treatments.

(3) Shaving or clipping hair is good

Shaving and clipping hair in the treatment area is good. Shaved or clipped hairs still have their hair root and this is what we want to target with the laser. We prefer a shaved skin area to laser. Shaving also allows you to shape the area just as you desire it (important for the face and bikini areas).

Shaving does not make hair grow back faster, thicker, darker, or more abundantly.

Hair that remains above the skin can interfere with the laser getting down to the hair root where the laser hair removal occurs.

Best bet is to shave the area the night before or morning of treatment. If you shave 1-2 hours before the laser treatment, you might find this area to be more sensitive than usual.

Shaving between treatments is our recommendation to keep the area smooth and hair free.

(4) Bleaching or dyeing your hair

This is fine. Laser hair removal works by targeting the natural hair colour in the hair root. Bleaching and dyeing hair only goes to the surface of the skin. You can bleach or dye hair between treatments.

(5) Timing between treatments

Hair grows in cycles and with every laser treatment we can expect to destroy some actively growing hairs, stun some follicles, and not affect those hair follicles that are empty or dormant (asleep). It takes about 6 – 12 weeks for the stunned and new hair follicles to grow hair out. Best bet would be to get laser hair treatments about 6 – 12 weeks apart for the best effects.

You can get laser hair removal done more frequently without harm but you will get less benefit because fewer actively growing hairs are present.

You can usually see the amount of hair growth that will occur after your last laser treatment within 8 weeks. You can wait longer between laser treatments but waiting longer than 12 weeks **does not** provide you any more benefit (e.g., more hairs to be destroyed).

(6) Keeping us informed

Please inform us if you have any new medications, new medical diagnoses, or a new tan since your last laser treatment. This will allow us to advise you appropriately and ensure that you get the most effective laser hair removal treatment.

31. What is a “test area”?

A “test area” is a small patch of skin that is treated with the laser at different levels of energy in order to determine the best and most effective laser treatment for you. We like to do a test area on darker skinned individuals because they may be more prone to side effects such as skin blisters or lightening of the skin pigment. Sometimes a small “test area” is done and then evaluated one week later to see the effects.

Light skinned individuals don't usually require a “test area” because lightening of skin pigment is very uncommon.

32. How does tanning or “fake tanning” affect laser treatments?

The Sciton Profile™ Nd:YAG 1064 nm laser can effectively treat all skin types and can be adjusted if you have tanned to a different skin colour. However, the most effective laser treatment occurs in people with light coloured skin and darker hairs.

This means that **we can do laser hair removal on tanned people** but if you want to get the most bang for your buck, avoid tanning (artificial or real) until you are completed all your laser sessions. Tanning lotions and creams artificially colour your skin and this has the same effects with the laser as does a real tan.

Best bet is to try and avoid tanning or using fake tanning lotions for at least 6 weeks prior to your laser hair treatment. If you do have a recent tan, please inform us when you come in for your laser session so we can adjust the laser to get the best results.

We advise that you do not tan for a few weeks after laser treatment to reduce the chance that your tan may come out uneven. We recommend sunscreen with an SPF of 45-60 directly after laser treatments.

33. What happens at the initial Consultation Appointment?

Your initial consultation appointment is with one of our laser technicians who will review the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have about the laser treatment. Our laser technicians will review your relevant medical history and briefly examine the hair that you wish to have removed to best determine your treatment parameters.

Our laser technicians are very knowledgeable and can usually answer any questions you may have. All our staff have also experienced laser hair removal first-hand and can share their experience.

If you are seeing us for the first time, it can help us to see a small amount of the hair growing in the area you wish to remove. We only require a short growth of hair to determine your treatment parameters. A photo of the proposed treatment area may be taken and kept within your private patient file. This allows us to follow treatment changes over time and assess improvement.

If you have booked your initial consultation and your laser treatment for the same day, please shave the planned treatment area ahead of time. Our expert laser technicians can still determine your treatment parameters even if the hair is not present.

34. What happens on laser treatment day?

Hello laser, goodbye razor!

There is no standard preparation for the laser treatment. You may eat or drink whatever you like prior to your appointment.

Please shave or clip the area a couple hours before or the day before your treatment. Recently shaved skin can be more sensitive. Shave your hair in the exact shape you desire. This is especially important for the bikini area or around sideburns or temples.

Please do not wear any makeup when you come in for the treatment. Makeup can absorb some of the laser energy and can reduce the effectiveness of hair removal or can lead to skin surface discomfort or burns. If you have to wear makeup, wear a water-based makeup that can be easily removed prior to treatment. For your convenience we have a large bathroom mirror where your makeup can be reapplied immediately following the laser treatment.

Upon your arrival, you will check in with our front desk to inform them you are here. Our laser technician will then take you to our treatment room where you may change (if applicable) or get prepared for treatment (lay on treatment chair). You will be given a pair of protective goggles to protect your eyes from the laser. Every person in the laser treatment room, including the patient must wear the appropriate protective eyewear.

Prior to every procedure, we review any changes to your health status, how your last treatment went, and review & sign the informed consent. A photo may be taken of your treatment area and kept in your private patient file.

Your procedure may range from lasting a few minutes to an hour depending on the area to be treated. Generally, smaller areas take less time than larger areas.

If you wish to have additional areas treated when you come in, please call us ahead of time so that we can ensure that there is enough time.

Once you are comfortably seated or lying on the treatment chair, we will apply a thin layer of clear gel to the skin. Next, our technician will apply the cooling glass window of the laser to pre-cool your skin surface. A small test area may be done to ensure you get the best and most effective laser hair removal treatment. The cooling glass window is applied to your skin before, during, and after your laser treatment pulses. The laser treatment pulses occur rapidly and gently to destroy the hair follicles. The technician then moves the laser onto the next section of skin to continue the treatment.

The treatment room has not been designed for spectators so our policy is to not have any friends or family in the room with you when you are getting a laser treatment session.

35. What happens after the treatment?

See our post-treatment suggestions below (#37).

Pre-Treatment and Post-Treatment Instructions:

36. Pre-treatment instructions

For best results:

- Avoid sun exposure, tanning beds, or tanning creams or lotions for 2-3 weeks prior to treatment and throughout the treatment sessions.
- Shave the treatment area 24 hours prior to laser treatment.
- Avoid heavy makeup application or use water-based makeup prior to treatment.
- Pamper yourself on laser treatment day – have a good meal or snack ahead of time. Do not come in rushed, hungry, thirsty, or stressed out. Laser hair removal should make you feel better not worse about yourself.

37. Post-treatment instructions

- You may apply an ointment or aloe vera to the area to prevent drying or crusting but this is not essential. If you get crusting/scabbing in the treatment area, please do not pick at it as this can make scarring more likely. Let the crust fall off on its own.
- If you have any blistering or cracks in the skin following laser treatment, you may apply an antibiotic ointment (purchased over-the-counter).
- Contact our office if there are any signs of infection in the treatment area (red, tenderness, pus).
- Do not shave the treated area for 2 – 3 days after treatment.
- If you are washing the treated area, please pat dry to avoid irritating the hair follicles (vigorous rubbing or drying can irritate the follicles).
- If you blister in the treatment area, you should be careful with makeup application as the area may be sensitive.
- Avoid hot tubs or very hot baths for 1-2 days following the treatment as this can irritate the follicles or cause skin discomfort in the treatment area.

38. Follow-up timeline

- After the initial treatment, we would like to see you in 2 weeks to evaluate the treatment site and ensure that we have chosen the right laser parameter to give you the best and most effective results.
- Otherwise, it is a good idea to book your follow up appointment 6 – 8 weeks apart.