

# Thinking of laser hair removal? Here's what you need to know according to Dr Naomi Dolly

There are many different options for hair removal, from waxing to threading and shaving to tweezing. However, laser hair removal is one of the few options that offers a more permanent approach to getting rid of body hair. Although this is so, there are still many concerns about what laser hair removal entails and whether or not it is a safe approach. We reached out to dermatologist and dermatopathologist Doctor Naomi Dolly of the Retouched by ND Clinic who explained that laser hair removal is the most common, permanent option of getting rid of your unwanted hair. It can be done anywhere you wish in speedy time and is less painful than waxing. It is also the best option when it comes to great precision/accuracy, speed, and predictability. To get a deeper understanding of this procedure and why it should be considered, we asked Doctor Dolly a few questions. Here is what she had to share with us:

## What should patients do before laser treatment?

Laser hair removal is more than just zapping hair, it is a medical procedure that requires training to perform and carries potential risks. Before getting laser hair removal you should thoroughly check the credentials of the doctor or technician performing the procedure. Before your treatment you should also limit plucking, waxing, and electrolysis for six weeks. This is because laser hair targets the hairs' roots, which are temporarily removed by plucking or waxing. If there's no follicle then the laser can't treat it. You should also try to avoid sun exposure (tanning) before and after laser treatments as it makes the treatment less effective and makes complications more likely.



The Gentle Max Pro

## What happens during your treatment?

Just before the procedure, your hair undergoing treatment will be trimmed to a few millimeters. Then, the laser settings will be adjusted based on your skin type, colour of hair, and thickness of the hair. Goggles or appropriate eye wear will then be used to protect your (and the technician's eyes) from the laser light, and gel may be applied to your skin depending on the type of laser being used. The technician will then start pulsing the handpiece over the treatment area until it is fully covered. Observation will be done for a few minutes to see if a good reaction occurs with the settings. Finally, ice packs and anti-inflammatory creams or lotions may be used to cool the area to decrease discomfort.



## Is laser hair removal permanent?

Laser hair removal is found to be 90 percent permanent. You might be wondering why we don't say 100 percent. Unfortunately, (or fortunately for some) throughout time our bodies may develop new follicles especially in changes in women's hormones, which can cause more hair to grow. This is why we recommend touch up sessions every few years.

## What should patients expect afterward?

Patients should expect to have a warm sunburn type of feeling for up to 24 hours. After that you can expect the hairs to grow and slowly fall out between five to 14 days. When your hair starts to grow back you can then schedule your next visit which can be around four to six weeks.

## How long does each session last?

Sessions last depending on how many areas are being done. Typically, a small area like your underarms could take around 15 minutes while a larger area like your legs could take around 40 minutes.



## Does laser hair removal hurt?

This question is all based on the type of laser and your pain tolerance. Typically, patients report that it feels like a rubber band snapping on your skin but is less painful than waxing - a procedure which also takes longer.

## What are the possible complications of laser hair removal?

Possible complications can include mild swelling around the hair follicles, pigment changes in patients with darker skin types, slight redness of the skin, and temporary irritation that results in blistering, crusting, scarring and changes in skin texture.



## Who should not pursue laser hair removal?

People with darker skin types should exert caution with lasers, and speak with their doctor about it, as typically laser hair removal was not recommended for people with dark skin types. However, with advanced technology some laser hair removal machines can now treat dark skin types, with their lower energy settings. People who have tans or have used spray tans should avoid lasers until the tan has worn off.

Pregnant patients should also exercise caution with laser hair removal simply because there is a lack of information about the effect it can have on the foetus. It is important to speak with your doctor before starting such a procedure.