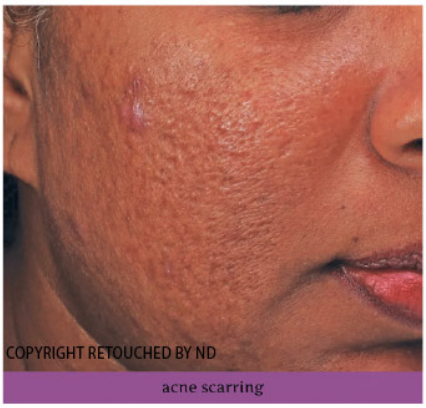
How to control acne scarring according to Dr Naomi Dolly

Many of us share similar sentiments towards acne breakouts and their frustrating nature. What makes them even worse is that they tend to leave unwanted scars on the face and other visible areas of the body. For many of us who suffer from acne, these scars are a constant reminder of the painful and bothersome acne condition that oftentimes affects our self-esteem and confidence. Fortunately, acne scars do not have to be permanent and are within our control as medical treatments can be used to help get rid of them. Deciding on the best treatment to control acne scarring can be difficult for an individual to determine on his/her own. For this reason, we caught up with board-certified dermatologist and dermatopathologist Dr Naomi Dolly of Retouched by ND Dermatology Clinic to give us a brief insight into two treatments that you can consider. Here is what she told us:

What causes acne scars?

Acne scars are usually the result of inflamed blemishes caused by skin pores filled with excess oil, dead skin cells and bacteria. The pore swells, causing a break in the follicle wall. If there is a deep break in the wall of the pore, infected material can spill out into surrounding tissue, creating deeper lesions. The skin attempts to repair these lesions by forming new collagen fibers, but the new collagen isn't as smooth and flawless as the original skin.



How are acne scars treated?

Acne scars are often difficult to treat. Often multiple modalities are needed. in my office we utilize microneedling, (carbon dioxide) CO2 laser, sublative radiofrequency microneedling, microdermabrasion and Pulsed dye laser, just to name a few.

What energy based treatments can be used to manage acne scars?

The treatments that we offer for acne scars include sublative and CO2RE® by Candela corp.and pulsed dye laser (Vbeam® Perfecta)

How do they work?

The sublative treatment works by delivering bipolar radio frequency energy via a matrix of 64 electrodes. The RF energy generates fractional deep dermal heating in the region of the electrode matrix to induce skin injury, thus eliciting a wound healing response. Acne scars as well as mild to moderate wrinkles and superficial skin discolourations are reduced, and skin texture becomes smoother and elastic. Meanwhile the (carbon dioxide) CO2 laser resurfacing uses very short pulsed light energy (known as ultrapulse) or continuous light beams that are delivered in a scanning pattern to remove thin layers of skin with minimal heat damage. As the new outer layer of skin grows, the body's natural healing mechanism stimulates new collagen formation that results in smoother and healthier looking skin.

How many treatments are required?

For the Sublative treatment we recommend three to six treatments every four to six weeks, while we recommend for the CO2RE®, one treatment every six months. Please be mindful that the total number of required treatments depend on the skin condition of the patient.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How long does it take to see results?

For both treatments, gradual results can typically be seen once your skin is done healing after each treatment. Optimal results would be seen around one to two weeks once you have completed the series of treatments.

Does this type of treatment hurt?

For Sublative and CO2RE®, topical anaesthetic ointments and cooling are used to reduce discomfort during treatment. While the procedures are being done, many patients feel a warm, prickly sensation as energy enters their skin. After treatment a pink or red "sunburn" appearance and feeling is also common.

Are there side effects?

Side effects for both procedures can include redness, swelling, itching, infection, changes in skin colour (hyperpigmentation/hypopigmentation), scarring and blistering. Your doctors will ensure that they give very detailed post care instructions and ointments for you to use to avoid such side effects.