



**CO<sub>2</sub> Laser Skin Resurfacing Instructions**  
**Dilute Vinegar Soaks Instructions** (*First 7 days*)  
**Morning and Evening Skin Care Routine** (*Week 1-3*)

*Supplies Needed:* Gauze pads, Aquaphor, Skincare products, distilled White vinegar, Distilled water, Prescribed oral medications

*\*You will need to purchase and make dilute vinegar soaking solution*

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**Two Weeks Before Procedure**

1. Stop smoking and all nicotine products at least 4 weeks before treatment. Nicotine delays healing and increases complications.
  2. **Avoid sunburns and tanning for at least 2 weeks before the procedure.** A fresh sunburn or tan will require rescheduling.
  3. **Discontinue retinols, acids, and harsh skincare products 14 days before treatment.**
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**Day Before Procedure**

1. If you receive local anesthesia (numbing cream topical or injection) only: Eat and drink normally but we recommend a light/bland meal prior to the procedure
  2. Take home prescribed medications as directed.
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**Morning/Day of Procedure**

1. Shower, wash hair, and cleanse your face thoroughly. Remove all makeup, creams, and lotions.
  2. Remove all jewelry, piercings, and contact lenses.
  3. If you have facial hair, shave before your appointment.
  4. If you were provided numbing topical cream from our office, put it on 1 hour before your appointment (okay to drive in with this cream on).
  5. If we provide topical numbing cream beforehand (not everyone gets this), **DO NOT** drink hot coffee or soup – you can burn yourself and not feel it!
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## After Procedure

1. Rest with your head elevated for at least 24 hours.
  2. **Skin will feel like a severe sunburn and may have pinpoint bleeding.** Scabbing begins around days 2-4 and typically flakes off within a week.
  3. The day of/after your laser procedure – use Aquaphor or healing balm to freshly treated skin; make sure the skin does not get dry. No other skin care products.
  4. **Start vinegar soaks the morning after your procedure.** Detailed instructions/recipe are provided below. Do not scrub or forcefully remove scabs, just let the solution seep into the skin and dry on its own or dab dry softly.
  5. Keep skin clean and moist for the first week. Apply Aquaphor (after vinegar soaks) or a healing ointment multiple times daily to prevent dryness.
  6. Use Extra Strength Tylenol (500 mg) for pain as needed. If the CO2 laser was performed alone (without other surgery), Motrin or Advil can also be used for pain.
  7. Itchy sensations: Okay to use nondrowsy antihistamine over the counter (i.e. Claritin, Zyrtec), or at night you can use Benadryl but it will make you drowsy.
  8. If treatment includes the mouth area and you have a history of cold sores, take the prescribed antiviral medication. Contact our office immediately if you feel tingling or early signs of a cold sore before or after the procedure or if you are developing new blisters.
  9. Redness/pinkness can last 6 weeks or longer but fades over time. Your skin may flush easily but will improve with time. A steroid cream may be provided around days 7 to help with redness.
  10. Expected results: The goal is 80-90% improvement in treated areas, but all lines and textures cannot be completely erased.
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## Activity Restrictions

1. Okay to shower after 24 hours. Avoid harsh facial soaps, scrubbing, or forcefully removing scabs.
2. Resume exercise after 2 weeks. Your skin may flush more easily but will improve over time.
3. If full-face laser was performed: Do not wear glasses for 5-7 days. Contacts may be worn anytime. Avoid anything that causes friction on treated areas. **No metal razor shaving for 8 weeks**, but electric razor trimming is allowed.
4. **Makeup may be used after 10 days.** Only mineral-based products are recommended.
5. **Avoid facials, retinols, and acids for at least 4 weeks post-procedure.** Introduce one skincare product at a time, with at least 1 week between new products to assess skin sensitivity.
6. **Sun protection is crucial for 4-6 months post-procedure.** The first 2 months are the most critical. Unprotected sun exposure may cause pigmentation changes. Use broad-spectrum

SPF 30+ sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, and dark sunglasses. Reapply sunscreen every 90 minutes when outdoors.

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### **Healing Process**

- Most patients do not feel presentable for 2 weeks.
  - Final healing takes about 2-3 months.
  - Common emotional responses: Temporary regret, sadness, or anxiety.
  - Uncommon emotional responses: Thoughts of self-harm, hallucinations, or extreme distress. If you experience these, please reach out for support.
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### **When to Call the Office**

Contact Gray Facial Plastic Surgery at 208-918-2416 immediately if you experience:

- Continuous bleeding
  - New eruptions, rashes or painful blisters on the face (this can be a sign of a viral infection)
  - Severe pain that is not relieved by medication
  - Persistent vomiting or fever that does not improve with prescribed medications
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If you have any concerns, call/text Gray Facial Plastic Surgery at 208-918-2416 (secure line for messaging/photos).

## **Skin Care/Vinegar Soak Instructions**

*Supplies Needed:* Gauze, Distilled Water (not provided), Distilled White Vinegar (not provided), Aquaphor

### **Vinegar Soaks Preparation:**

- *Option 1 (Small batch):* Mix 1 cup of distilled water with 1 tablespoon of distilled white vinegar and store the mixture in the refrigerator.
- *Option 2 (Large batch – recommended for the week):* Remove 1 cup of distilled water from 1 gallon jug, then mix 1 cup of distilled white vinegar into the gallon of distilled water and store mixture in the refrigerator.

### **Application Instructions:**

- Soak gauze pads or a clean washcloth in the chilled vinegar-water mixture and ring out.
- Unfold and rest soaked gauze pads/cloth gently on your face to affected areas of skin shedding.

### **Post-Treatment Daily 5-Step Day 1-7 Skincare Routine:**

#### (1) Morning Routine

- Step 1: Cleanse face with gentle cleanser (*recommend Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser*)
- Step 2: Apply vinegar soak for 3-5 minutes to treated areas; do not scrub skin just let soak
- Step 3: Okay to gently dab dry or air dry
- Step 4: Apply a small amount of moisturizer (*recommend Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream*)
- Step 5: Apply a thin to medium layer of Aquaphor to all treated areas

#### (2) Mid-morning Vinegar Soak + Aquaphor

- Gently wipe off any old Aquaphor/oils from face
- Perform vinegar soak as instructed above
- Reapply a thin to medium layer of Aquaphor
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#### (3) Afternoon Routine

- Step 1: Cleanse face with gentle cleanser (*recommend Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser*)
- Step 2: Apply vinegar soak for 3-5 minutes to treated areas; do not scrub skin just let soak
- Step 3: Okay to gently dab dry or air dry
- Step 4: Apply a small amount of moisturizer (*recommend Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream*)
- Step 5: Apply a thin to medium layer of Aquaphor to all treated areas

#### (4) Mid-afternoon Vinegar Soak + Aquaphor

- Gently wipe off any old Aquaphor/oils from face
- Perform vinegar soak as instructed above
- Reapply a thin to medium layer of Aquaphor

#### (5) Nighttime Routine

- Step 1: Cleanse face with gentle cleanser (*recommend Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser*)
- Step 2: Apply vinegar soak for 3-5 minutes to treated areas; do not scrub skin just let soak
- Step 3: Okay to gently dab dry or air dry
- Step 4: Apply a small amount of moisturizer (*recommend Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream*)
- Step 5: Apply a thin to medium layer of Aquaphor to all treated areas

Continue this routine for the first week to assist skin debridement (shedding), expedited skin healing and to minimize overall inflammation. Expect fresh, pink skin to replace the shedding areas.

**Daily Skincare Routine (starting AFTER Day 7)**  
**To be performed Day 8-21 (end week 3)**

*Morning Routine:*

1. Cleanse your face with gentle cleanser (recommend *Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser*)
2. (Provided) Hydrocortisone 2.5% (redness cream) – spot treat pink areas until this clears
3. Apply a small of Moisturizer (recommend *Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream*)
4. Your choice of Sunscreen SPF 30+ (reapply throughout the day)
5. Mineral-based Makeup of your choosing (if desired)

*Evening Routine (let each product absorb into skin before the next):*

1. Gentle Facial Cleanser (i.e. Cetaphil)
2. (Provided) Hydroquinone 4% (nighttime whitening cream – Purple/white tube!) – entire face, prevents pigment issues

\*Don't get confused with hydrocortisone steroid cream!

3. (Provided) Hydrocortisone 2.5% (redness cream) – spot treat pink areas until this clears
4. Apply moisturizer (i.e. Cetaphil)

*\*Retinol products can be resumed at 4 weeks post laser, but ease back into them. If you would like a retinol product, please contact our clinic for our product recommendations.*