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THERMAGE®
THERMALIFT THERMACOOL

Thermage is the most innovative, non-surgical, non-invasive, no “down time” procedure for treatment of wrinkle lines, loose or lax skin and body areas which need firming and contouring. The manufacturer is Thermage, Inc. of Hayward, California. We have been using Thermage in our office to treat skin laxity of the face and neck since May of 2003. The machine was FDA approved for treatment of eye area lines (crow’s feet) in November 2002. In January 2006, FDA approval was granted for treatment to any area of the body, including the eyelids. Body shaping treatments are beneficial for treatment of loose, crepey skin, as well as for deep contouring and circumferential reduction. In September, 2007, Thermage received FDA approval for the Cellulite Tip, which was specifically designed for treatment of cellulite. In October 2007, FDA clearance was received for the Deep Contouring Tip, which is used for contouring of the abdomen, “love handles,” thighs, buttocks and upper arms. The thin skin of the eyelids is treated with a specialized tip with a shallow heating profile. Thermage had also been found to provide a modest improvement to acne scars.

Much of the advanced technology is in the disposable tip, which must be programmed for the impedance (electrical resistance) of each individual. Four corner sensors measure the temperature of the cooled skin surface. The passage of radiofrequency energy is automatically blocked if the protective temperature is not correct. This system guards against surface damage and allows the ability to treat with no “down time.”

Each pulse of radiofrequency causes a uniform heating of the deep layers (dermis) of the skin. The collagen structure responds to heating with a measurable contraction, then additional deposition of collagen. The full response, allowing time for new collagen formation, may be seen in as little as two months and may take as long as six months.

Thermage Cellulite Treatment provides benefit to patients with mild to moderate cellulite. By applying deep heat, along with specific superficial cooling, the collagenous connective tissues are restored and local circulation is improved. This results in smoothing of dimples and improved skin texture.

The Deep Contouring tip is designed for the same smoothing and tightening of the skin which the standard tip provides but, since the heat penetrates approximately 80% deeper, a body contouring effect is seen. Treatment results in circumferential reduction, decrease in surface irregularities, improvement of skin texture, firming, lifting and tightening of lax skin. Positive results have been reported in 2-3 months, with increased improvement at 5-7 months.

Thermage treatment to the eyelids and surrounding area results in tighter, smoother skin. Following treatment, the eyes appear more open, wrinkle lines, “crow’s feet and under eye bags are reduced. Smoother eyelid skin makes application of makeup easier. The eyelids can be treated alone, or in conjunction with the face and neck. To protect the eye from absorbing heat, plastic eye shields will be inserted. Pontocaine or Tetracaine ophthalmic drops will be instilled to numb the eye prior to insertion of the eye shield. A small 0.25 cm treatment tip with a shallow heating profile will be used on the eyelid skin. The regular 3.0 cm tip will be used on the area above the eyelid, below the eye and on the outer eye corners. The treatment is associated with very little discomfort and minimal swelling. If eyes are dry or irritated following treatment, artificial tears can be used.

Thermage has provided consensus guidelines, which assure safer treatment with more consistent results. Our office is consensus guideline certified as of August, 2005. We have incorporated all of the latest treatment advances for the Thermage procedure. Current consensus guidelines, which reviewed 5700 Thermage cases reveal a 93% patient satisfaction rate. Results have been shown to last 2-4 years. As with any procedure, individual results may vary. You may visit the Thermage website at www.thermage-info.com.

Advantages:

- Non-surgical, non-invasive procedure.
- No general anesthesia required.
- No “down time” allows return to usual activities without delay.
- Gradual improvement in appearance rather than sudden change.
- Conservative improvement, which appears natural and not "overstretched".
- Option for additional treatment for further improvement if desired.
- Relatively short treatment time of thirty minutes to two hours.
- Option of limiting treatment to one area with subsequent applications to other areas or zones at a later date.
- Costs are much less than comparative surgical procedures for similar benefit.

Disadvantages:

- Best results are seen with mild to moderate wrinkling and laxity.
- Response in more severe wrinkling or laxity is unpredictable and may range from minimal to more than satisfactory.
- Discomfort of treatment ranges from mild to severe and usually requires mild sedative and/or pain medication.
- The use of Valium or Vicodin requires a responsible driver.**
- Some individuals will require a second treatment for best results and some will not respond at all.
- Long term ill effects have not been seen and are not expected, but are unknown.

Possible Side Effects May Include:

- Redness may be expected and may last a few hours.
- Blistering has been reported but is a rare exception. Blistering can lead to infection, which can be health or life threatening, and may result in scarring.
- Swelling is typically minimal and may last 3-4 weeks, with swollen areas feeling tender. In rare cases, swelling may be moderate, but decreases within a week. Nodular swelling may also occur and resolves within a month.
- Transient and focal altered sensation with tingling or numbness have been reported. Resolution is typically within a few weeks. Nerve damage may occur at the treatment site. This side effect is unlikely but can occur.
- Skin textural changes (usually for the better), “surface irregularities,” such as “small dents,” “rippling,” “ridging,” or “waffle pattern” have been reported. These may be delayed and become evident one or more months following treatment but usually resolve or can be treated with tissue fillers such as collagen and Restylane.
- Adverse events have been reported at a rate of .04%.

Contraindications:

- Pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Pacemaker or internal defibrillator
- Cochlear implants
- Implantable ocular lenses (if treating eyelids)

Cautions:

- Dental braces
- Dental prostheses (dentures), unless removable
- Metal parts in the area to be treated (bone screws, plates, wires)
- Diabetes
- Autoimmune disease
- Permanent makeup- we will not treat over permanent makeup, as it often contains iron oxide, which can absorb excessive heat. If permanent makeup is present in the treatment area, we will treat around it
- Post Lasik- treatment to eyelids must be delayed several months to allow for proper healing