



Skin Deep: The CO2 Laser Healing Journey

A 30-Day Post-Procedure Guide for
Full-Face CO2 Fractional Laser

ROHAN VERMA, M.D.

OCULOFACIAL PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY



SHILEY EYE INSTITUTE
UC SAN DIEGO



STANFORD
UNIVERSITY



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
OPHTHALMIC PLASTIC &
RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY
OCULOFACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY®



CASEY EYE
Institute



Day of surgery:

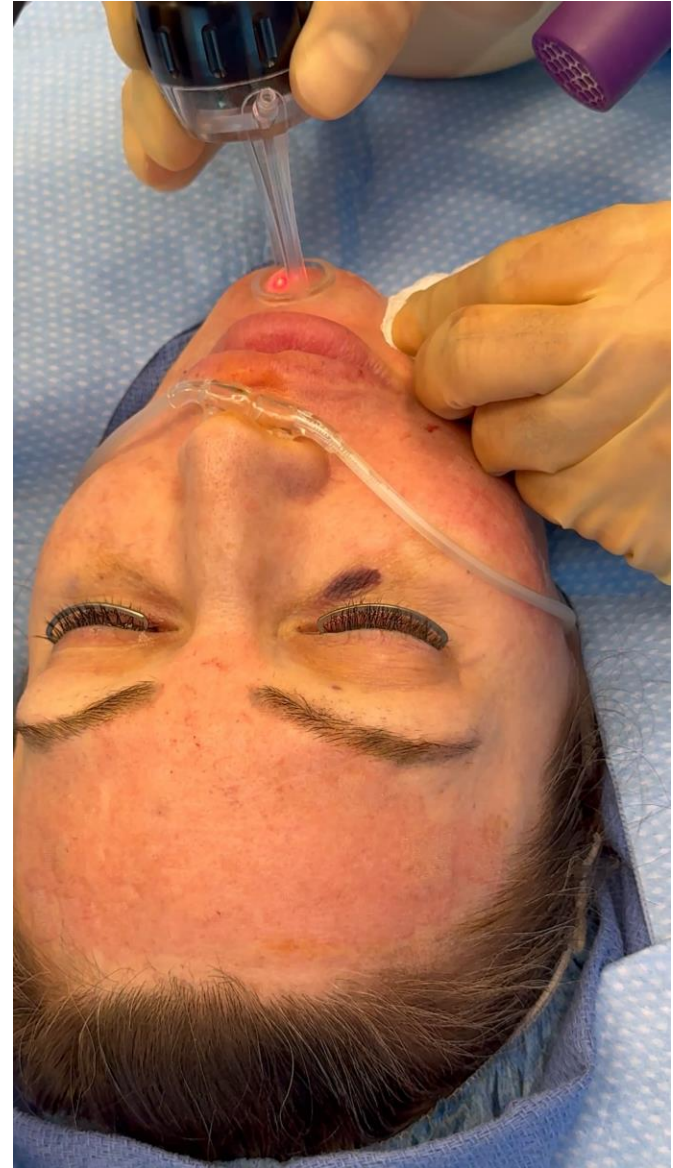
- Take all prescribed medications
- Wash face with mild soap and sunscreen
- No eating or drinking 12 hours prior to surgery
- Prepare medications, ointments, creams and vinegar wash
- Dress warm and comfortable, with a button down to avoid touching face
- Driver to take you to surgery



Pre-Op: Setting the Stage

- Start antivirals for HSV history
- Avoid sun, retinoids, and exfoliants 5–7 days prior
- Optional: Hydroquinone for PIH prevention
- Set expectations: redness, swelling, downtime







Day of procedure:

- Immediate heat, redness, and swelling
- Grid like pattern on skin
- Start cooling, occlusive ointments (e.g., Aquaphor)
- Pain control: Tylenol, Ibuprofen

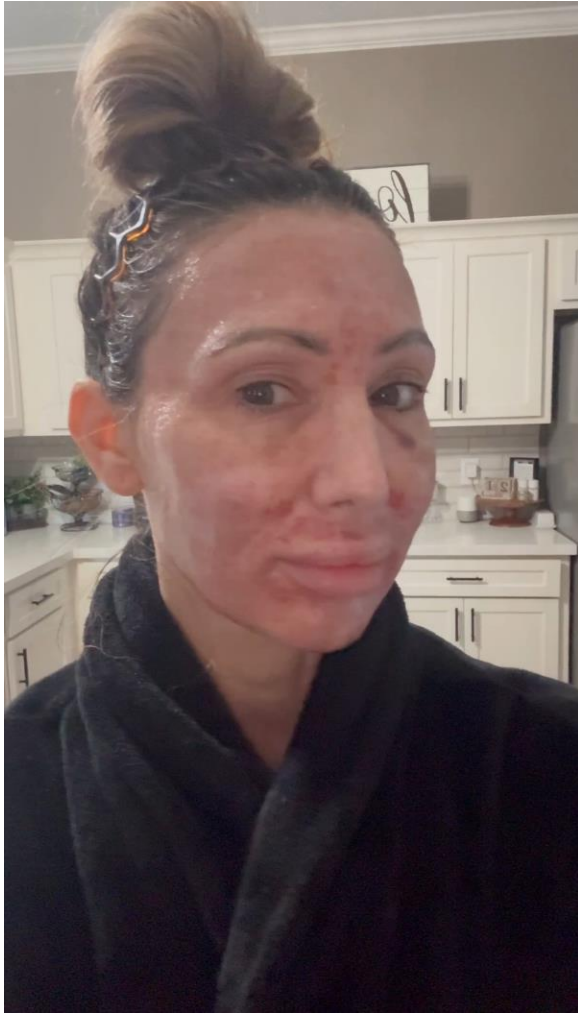


Day 1–3: Inflammatory Phase

- Peak discomfort window
- Red, swollen, weepy skin
- Sleep upright to reduce swelling
- Vinegar soaks and ointments
- Avoid touching or picking



DAY 1-3



Day 4–7: Re-epithelialization

- Peeling begins (do not touch or pick)
- Switch from ointments to barrier creams
- Red/pink underlying skin
- Light makeup only after full re-epithelialization



Day 4–7



Week 2: Early Remodeling

- Texture improves, skin smoother
- Pinkness persists
- Gentle skincare resumes niacinamide
- Continue avoiding retinoids and exfoliants



Week 3–4: Glow Phase

- Normal routine resumes cautiously
- SPF is essential
- Avoid intense treatments or heat exposure
- Redness fading, collagen forming



1-Month Follow-Up

- Assess redness, PIH, and healing
- Evaluate need for further treatment
- Maintenance planning (PRP, topicals)
- Wait 3+ months for repeat laser sessions



Key Takeaways

- Healing is a 4-week visible and 3–6 month cellular journey with collagen and elastin production
- Set expectations clearly
- Monitor and support patients daily
- Encourage SPF and barrier protection