

ActiveFX Fractional CO₂ Resurfacing Offers Total Rejuvenation

By Bob Kronemyer, Associate Editor



Before Tx



After one ActiveFX Tx

Photos courtesy of David Kaufman, M.D.

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Total skin rejuvenation with just one treatment session and minimal downtime is now achievable, thanks to the ActiveFX Fractional CO₂ laser procedure from Lumenis Inc. (Santa Clara, Calif.). "Compared to the non-ablative systems, the ActiveFX laser allows a wonderful degree of tightening with a single treatment, along with surface cleansing of the skin," said Scott Wells, M.D., a plastic surgeon in private practice in Manhattan, N.Y.

"CO₂ has traditionally proven itself to be one of the most effective modalities for deep heating, and thus tightening and collagen formation within the dermis. But the fractioned form of CO₂ delivery with the ActiveFX offers very, very good results with short downtime and easy patient recuperation," explained Dr. Wells.

Dr. Wells routinely treats the face, neck, décolleté and hands with the ActiveFX. "We pre-treat the patient with a lightening agent and retinoids," he said. A typical treatment session lasts between 30 and 55 minutes, the latter when treating all areas. "The face alone can be treated in 20 to 25 minutes," Dr. Wells noted. For pain management and relaxation, patients are often administered a topical gel and an oral medication.

Laser power settings are adjusted, depending on the area treated. For example, higher energy is used on the face because of the greater number of adnexal units (sweat glands). "This results in more rapid healing," Dr. Wells said. Lower energy settings are used off the face, where there are fewer adnexal structures. "In these areas, you can perform much more aggressive treatments at lower energy levels," he said.

At the end of five days, most of the superficial peel is gone in the typical patient. "A little bit of pinkness is left to the skin," Dr. Wells observed. "Initially, there is a very nice cleansing effect. A lot of the brown spots — keratoses and the like — are greatly diminished, if

not completely eradicated. But what is most exciting is that over the ensuing six months, there is a progressive tightening of the skin, not only of the very surface microfine lines and creases, but a very significant 'shrink-wrapping' effect. This provides the skin with much greater elasticity and skin turgor." The initial collagen boost lasts about four to six months.

According to Dr. Wells, treatment can be repeated as early as three months for more aggressive tightening. "Our goal, though, is usually to achieve our desired results in a single treatment. Patients really love treatment. At first, they are happy. However, they don't even see the full effect of the results for several months. This is organic treatment, whereby the collagen formation mechanism is stimulated. Patients are amazed by the eventual results. We have patients from about eight months ago who continue to look really good."

Patient word-of-mouth has been the strongest marketing resource for Dr. Wells. Compared to competing fractional resurfacing technologies, the ActiveFX laser "can do way more in a single treatment," Dr. Wells stated. "These other technologies are very effective, but require typically four to six sessions — more often closer to six sessions — to achieve anything comparable to the ActiveFX."

For much more aggressive results, the ActiveFX laser can also be used in the MaxFX mode, but with greater downtime. The system can also be used to perform blepharoplasty, brow lift, and treat rhynophyma, as well as many other incisional and excisional procedures. "So there is a lot of flexibility within this laser system," Dr. Wells said.