

| fact sheet |

LASER TATTOO REMOVAL

How does laser tattoo removal work?

The laser that we use to remove tattoos is designed to specifically target tattoo pigment without targeting normal skin. When the tattoo pigment is treated with the laser, it breaks the pigment into smaller fragments that the body's immune system is then able to remove. This process results in a fading of the tattoo over several treatments.

What kinds of tattoos can be treated with laser tattoo removal?

The laser can remove many professional and amateur tattoos as well as cosmetic tattoos such as lip liner, eyeliner, or eyebrow tattoos.

How well does the process work?

Successful tattoo removal varies with the type of tattoo, the color of the ink, the density of the pigment, the size and depth of the tattoo, and the body's reaction to the treatment. Tattoos that are partially faded, older, homemade, and those that consist of only black ink are the easiest to remove. Some tattoos may be removed in as few as two or three treatments, while others may require up to a dozen treatments to fade.



We generally recommend patients wait four to six weeks between treatments to allow the tattoo ample time to fade. Multi-colored tattoos, especially those with yellow, purple, or brighter colors, may be difficult or impossible to completely remove.

What are the side effects to laser tattoo removal?

The most common problem with laser tattoo removal is incomplete removal of the tattoo. This is most common in multi-colored tattoos. Another risk associated with laser tattoo removal is a residual change in the skin pigmentation. The skin in the treated area may end up lighter or darker than the normal skin. This is most common in people who have dark skin tones and in those who have exposed the treated area to the sun.

To minimize the chance of side effects, it is important to protect the treated area from sun exposure during the course of the removal process.

How is laser tattoo removal performed?

Laser tattoo removal is performed in the office as a patient rests on a soft treatment table. A topical or injectable numbing agent is generally applied to the tattoo area to decrease discomfort. The eyes are covered with eye shields to protect them from the laser light and the laser is set for the specific type of tattoo pigment to be removed. The entire treatment session usually takes fifteen minutes or less.

What happens after the treatment?

Immediately following treatment, the tattoo will have a whitish appearance, develop some swelling, and may have some pinpoint bleeding. Antibiotic ointment and a bandage are applied to the treated area. The treated area will take one to two weeks to heal and will then begin to fade. During the healing process, gentle cleansing of the area and continued application of antibiotic ointment is recommended.

Is laser tattoo removal safe for pregnant women?

No. Just as getting a tattoo during pregnancy is discouraged, so is removal of a tattoo. The reason this particular procedure is not recommended is because it breaks up the ink, which is then absorbed into your body.



All other cosmetic procedures offered at Gateway are safe during pregnancy. Numbing creams, however, may not be used, because similar to the tattoo removal process, numbing creams are absorbed into the body and therefore could pose a risk to a pregnant woman.

How do I know if my tattoo can be treated?

Call Gateway Aesthetic Institute & Laser Center at (801) 595-1600 to schedule a free consultation.

We are located at the south end of the Gateway Mall in Salt Lake City at 440 West 200 South, Suite 250, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.