



# THE DO-IT-ALL FACIAL

The SpectraPeel laser facial is said to shrink pores, improve skin texture and work even on the worst acne-plagued skin. Diana Ong shares her first-hand experience.

A friend of a friend had such bad acne that even after three years of going for regular facials, her blemishes wouldn't clear up. But three months after trying out the SpectraPeel laser facial, her pimply woes quickly disappeared. I was instantly intrigued by this new treatment.

The SpectraPeel laser is touted in the aesthetics industry as one of the best ways of attaining unblemished skin, not only because it is non-ablative, gentle, and has no downtime, but also because it delivers fast results.

Pimples should begin to reduce in size after just one session, and those with severe acne problems can expect dramatic improvements in three or more treatments, which should be spaced one to two weeks apart.

"The SpectraPeel treatment produces excellent results in patients with very oily skin, open pores and acne issues. Sometimes, even skin pigmentation is reduced," says Dr Eileen Tan of Eileen Tan Skin, Laser & Hair Clinic, who performs about five to 10 SpectraPeel treatments a week.

The Sloane Clinic's medical director, Dr Low Chai Ling, who's also an advocate of SpectraPeel, adds that it is highly popular among young adults aged between 20 to 35. "They typically have oilier skin and would like to achieve smoother, less oily skin and smaller pores in a way that is fuss-free, which SpectraPeel is able to achieve." Costs for the treatment range from \$350 to \$800 per session.

## ZIT ZAPPER

Hoping to be rid of an unsightly pimple on my left cheek, I consulted Dr Vanessa Phua of Asia HealthPartners, who performed the SpectraPeel laser facial treatment on the acne-plagued woman mentioned at the beginning of this story.

The treatment took only half an hour, excluding a 15-minute

consultation beforehand, which is de rigeur for all first-timers. A numbing cream was first applied to my skin, followed ten minutes later by a carbon mask, which acts as a "target" for the laser energy. This laser energy triggers both a heat reaction to treat acne, as well as a chemical effect to cleanse plugged pores and reduce sebum production and pore size.

The pain I experienced was more than tolerable. I had tried I<sup>2</sup>PL (second generation IPL) treatments before and ended up squealing like a pig, even with numbing cream on.

This laser facial, however, felt like someone was holding sparklers (the kind you played with when you were a kid) near my face — it felt hot, but was not extremely painful.

Afterwards, my skin felt dry and looked a little red and blotchy, as if I had gone for a regular facial. But the angry pimple on my left cheek had reduced to half its size. In addition, the pores on my nose appeared much smaller and my skin more refined. The following day, my face looked more radiant and the pimple was no more than a tiny red dot, although I did suffer from some peeling on my face.

Unfortunately, while the results were good, they were not long-lasting. Dr Phua informed me that the initial benefits last about a week, but will be more permanent if SpectraPeel laser facials are done continually over a period of time (the frequency and length will depend on individual needs). "The laser facial shrinks your sebaceous glands to target acne problems, and the shrinkage becomes more permanent with more treatments."

Will the arrival of laser facials on the market signal the end of regular ones? "Not likely," says Dr Phua, who goes for regular facials herself. "Regular facials are very pampering because in addition to treating your face, they often also offer a neck-and-shoulder massage or a hand massage, but some people do see better results with laser facials."