

TATTOO REMOVAL PRE + POST CARE

Before Your Treatment — Pre-Care Instructions

- Avoid sun exposure and tanning — Keep the treatment area out of direct sun and avoid tanning beds, self-tanners, and spray tans for at least 4 weeks before each session. Treating tanned skin increases the risk of hypopigmentation, hyperpigmentation, and burns.
- Arrive with clean, product-free skin — The treatment area should be clean and completely free of lotions, sunscreen, makeup, perfume, or any other products on the day of your appointment.
- Avoid blood-thinning medications & supplements — If medically safe to do so, avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, fish oil, vitamin E, and alcohol for at least 5-7 days before to minimize bruising and bleeding at the treatment site.
- Avoid active skincare on the area — Stop applying retinol, AHAs, BHAs, and exfoliating products to the treatment area for at least 5 days before your appointment.
- No other skin treatments on the area — Avoid chemical peels, microneedling, waxing, or other laser treatments over the tattoo for at least 2-4 weeks beforehand.
- Stay well hydrated — Drink plenty of water in the days leading up to your appointment. Well-hydrated skin responds better and supports the body's lymphatic clearance of fragmented ink particles.
- Avoid alcohol — Do not consume alcohol for at least 24-48 hours before your appointment as it thins the blood and can impair the immune response needed to clear treated ink.
- Disclose medications & conditions — Inform your provider of all medications (especially photosensitizing drugs, immunosuppressants, or blood thinners), skin conditions, history of keloid scarring, autoimmune conditions, or any previous tattoo removal treatments. Certain inks, particularly white, yellow, and flesh-toned pigments, may react unpredictably to Q-switch laser.

After Your Treatment — Post-Care Instructions

- Expect an immediate white frosting — A temporary white or gray frosting of the skin immediately after treatment is a normal and expected response — it is caused by rapid gas formation from the laser interacting with the ink and resolves within 20-30 minutes.
- Expect redness, swelling, and blistering — Redness, swelling, tenderness, and pinpoint bleeding or blistering in the treated area are all normal responses and typically resolve within 1-2 weeks. Do not be alarmed by blisters — they are part of the healing process.
- Keep the area clean and protected — Gently cleanse the treated area with mild soap and lukewarm water. Pat dry with a clean, soft cloth. Apply a thin layer of healing ointment (such as Aquaphor or as directed) and cover with a non-stick bandage or clean dressing for the first few days.
- Apply SPF every day — Once healed, protect the treated area with SPF 30-50 every day without exception. UV exposure between sessions can cause hyperpigmentation and interfere with ink clearance results.
- Avoid picking, scratching, or rubbing — Do not pick at scabs, flaking skin, or blisters. Allow everything to shed naturally to minimize scarring and support even fading.
- Avoid heat and sweat — Skip intense exercise, saunas, steam rooms, and hot showers for at least 48 hours after treatment to reduce inflammation and infection risk.
- Avoid submerging the area — Do not swim, use hot tubs, or submerge the treated area in water until fully healed — typically 1-2 weeks — to prevent infection.
- Support your immune system — The Q-switch laser shatters ink particles into fragments, which your immune system then clears over the following weeks. Staying hydrated, eating well, exercising regularly between sessions, and avoiding smoking all support faster ink clearance.

- Allow full healing between sessions — Sessions must be spaced at least 6-8 weeks apart to allow the skin to heal fully and for the immune system to clear the fragmented ink before the next treatment. Do not rush the process.

Contact your provider immediately if you experience:

- Signs of infection: increasing redness, warmth, swelling, pus, or fever
- Blisters that are rapidly expanding, very painful, or appear infected
- Significant or worsening skin discoloration (very dark or very light patches)
- Raised scarring or unusual skin texture changes
- Any unexpected ink color changes (particularly if white, yellow, or flesh-toned ink darkens)
- Any skin changes or symptoms that concern you during healing

Tattoo removal is a gradual process that works with your immune system — the laser breaks the ink into particles, and your body does the rest. Results vary based on ink color, depth, age of the tattoo, skin tone, and overall health. Black and dark blue inks respond fastest; green, yellow, and light colors take longer. Most tattoos require 6-12 or more sessions for significant fading or full removal. Staying healthy, hydrated, and avoiding smoking between sessions meaningfully speeds up results.