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CONSULTANT PLASTIC SURGEON

PATIENT INFORMATION

Stretch mark treatment

IPL, CO2 laser and Morpheus8 for stretch marks

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Sevenoaks & Oxted

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This booklet explains stretch mark treatment and what to expect.

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01 Why you have this booklet

You've been given this booklet because you have talked to Mr Kumar about treating stretch marks, or you're about to.

It explains what stretch marks are, the treatments, how to prepare, and the risks and recovery.

It won't answer every question, and it isn't a substitute for talking things through with Mr Kumar, so please note down anything you want to ask and bring it to your next appointment. There is space for your questions at the back.

02 What stretch mark treatment involves

Stretch marks are a type of scar. When the skin stretches faster than it can adapt, as it does in pregnancy, growth spurts or rapid weight change, the collagen and elastic fibres in the deeper layer of the skin break, and the skin heals with thin, flat scars.

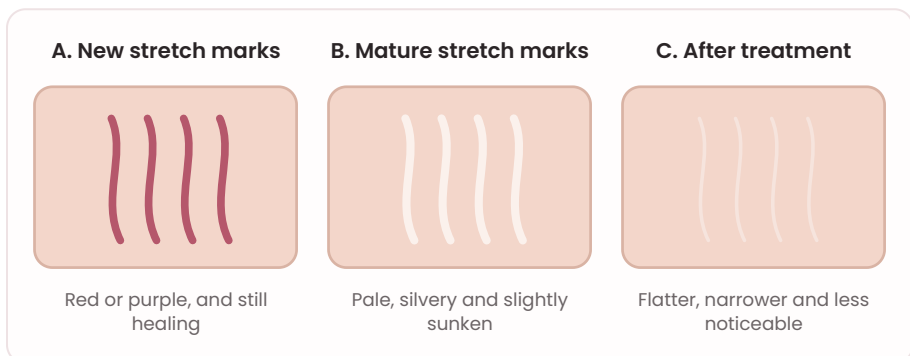


Figure 1. How stretch marks change over time, and with treatment. A simplified drawing for guidance only.

New stretch marks are red or purple because they are still healing, and this is when they respond best. Over the following months they mature into pale,

silvery lines, which are harder, though not impossible, to improve.

IPL (intense pulsed light)

Light energy targets the blood vessels that make new stretch marks red or purple, so they fade and blend in, with very little downtime. Usually a course of three to five sessions about four weeks apart.

CO2 laser

A fractional CO2 laser treats thousands of tiny columns of the stretched skin. As it heals, new collagen forms and the marks become flatter, narrower and smoother. Usually a course of sessions, a month or more apart.

Morpheus8

Fine needles deliver radiofrequency energy beneath the surface, stimulating collagen and tightening the skin. It is usually the safer choice for darker skin. Up to three sessions, four to six weeks apart.

Combination treatment

Many people get the best result from a plan, for example IPL for the redness, then CO2 laser or Morpheus8 for the texture.

03 Before you decide

You're likely to be a good candidate if:

- ✓ stretch marks bother you because of how they look or feel
- ✓ you have recovered from pregnancy, or your weight has been stable for a few months
- ✓ you can protect the area from the sun and avoid tanning during your course

- ✓ you have realistic expectations: stretch marks become less noticeable, rather than disappearing

What the treatment won't do

- **It won't make stretch marks disappear completely**, although most people see a clear improvement.
- **It won't tighten large amounts of loose skin.** If pregnancy has left loose or overhanging skin, a tummy tuck may be a better option.

Please tell Mr Kumar if you have, or have had

- you are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy
- you tan easily, have darker skin, or have had dark marks after injuries or previous treatments
- you use retinoid creams, or medicines that make your skin sensitive to light
- a pacemaker, or metal implants near the area, before Morpheus8
- a tendency to keloid or thickened scars

04 Other options

You don't have to have treatment. Depending on your stretch marks, the alternatives include:

- prescription retinoid creams for new, red stretch marks (not in pregnancy or while breastfeeding)
- standard microneedling
- a tummy tuck, if the stretch marks sit on loose skin below the belly button

- camouflage make-up or self-tan
- doing nothing, as stretch marks fade with time

05 What you can expect from the result

Results build gradually as new collagen forms, with the full effect three to six months after your final session. Red marks fade, and white marks become flatter, smoother and less noticeable. Their colour is harder to change than their texture, and stretch marks rarely disappear completely.

06 Getting ready

Please:

- ✓ avoid tanning, sunbeds and fake tan on the area for four weeks before treatment
- ✓ stop retinoid creams on the area about a week before laser
- ✓ come with clean skin, with no creams or oils on the area
- ✓ wear loose, comfortable clothing that is easy to remove from the area

07 Anaesthetic and where it happens

Numbing cream is applied about 45 to 60 minutes before CO2 laser and Morpheus8. IPL needs no anaesthetic. Treatment takes place in clinic, and you go home straight afterwards.

08 The procedure

Your eyes are protected with goggles during IPL and laser. For CO2 laser, Mr Kumar passes the laser handpiece over the area in sections. It feels hot and prickly. Morpheus8 feels like warmth and pressure. Each session takes 30 to 60 minutes.

An IPL session takes 20 to 30 minutes and feels like a quick, warm snap against the skin.

09 Recovery

- ✓ **After IPL**, mild redness settles within hours to a day. Carry on as normal.
- ✓ **After CO2 laser**, the area is red and feels sunburnt for two to three days. Keep it moist with the ointment provided.
- ✓ **From day four to seven**, the skin flakes and peels. Don't pick it, and wear loose, soft clothing.
- ✓ **After Morpheus8**, expect redness and some swelling for a few days, sometimes with faint grid marks that fade.
- ✓ **Avoid swimming, saunas and hot baths** until the skin has settled.
- ✓ **Protect the area from the sun** during your course and for three months afterwards.

10 Risks and complications

Most people recover without any serious problems. But like any treatment it carries risks, and you should understand them before you decide. Where reliable published figures exist, we've given an approximate, rounded figure. Where they don't, we've used these standard terms:

COMMON more than 1 in 100	UNCOMMON 1 in 100 to 1 in 1,000	RARE 1 in 1,000 to 1 in 10,000	VERY RARE fewer than 1 in 10,000
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Your own risk may be higher or lower depending on your health, whether you smoke, and the details of your treatment. Mr Kumar will talk through what applies to you.

What almost everyone experiences

These aren't really complications. They're a normal part of healing.

- Redness and warmth after treatment.
- Flaking and peeling for about a week after CO2 laser.

- Some pinkness for several weeks.

Other complications

- **Temporary darkening of the skin** **COMMON**
Brown patches can appear a few weeks after treatment, more often in darker skin. They usually fade with creams and sun protection.
- **Prolonged redness** **UNCOMMON**
Pinkness lasting longer than three months.
- **Blistering** **UNCOMMON**
Small blisters after IPL or laser, which usually heal without a mark.
- **Infection** **UNCOMMON**
Usually treated with antibiotic cream or tablets.
- **Lighter patches of skin** **RARE**
Can appear months later and may be permanent.
- **Scarring** **RARE**
Very rarely, treatment can cause new scarring.

Complications of the anaesthetic

Numbing cream is very safe. Rarely it causes redness or an allergic reaction.

11 Further treatment

Most people need a course of treatments, and some choose further sessions to improve the result. Your plan, and the likely number of sessions, will be explained at your consultation. The cost of any extra sessions isn't automatically included in your original fee; the clinic team can explain our policy.

12 Photographs and records

Photographs are taken before and after your treatment and kept in your medical records. They help Mr Kumar plan your treatment, record how things looked beforehand and follow your progress. This is standard good practice. If we ever want to use your photographs for teaching, publication or marketing, we will ask you separately and specifically, and saying no won't affect your care in any way.

13 Costs and insurance

Stretch mark treatment is considered cosmetic, so it isn't covered by health insurance. You'll receive a written quote first, setting out the number of sessions you are likely to need. Self-pay consultations cost £250 and follow-ups £150.

14 Your decision

This is your decision and you have the right to:

- ✓ take as long as you need to decide, and bring someone with you to appointments
- ✓ say no to treatment, or withdraw your consent at any stage, without having to explain why and without it affecting any other care you receive
- ✓ ask for a second opinion from another surgeon.

15 Your personal information

Your personal and medical information is kept securely and used in line with UK data protection law (the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018). It's only shared with the people directly involved in your care, or where the law requires it, unless you give your consent for anything else.

16 Who to contact, and when to get help urgently

If you have any questions or worries, please contact the clinic during opening hours on 020 3026 9695 or info@theuclinic.com.

Contact us promptly if you have

- signs of infection: increasing pain, spreading redness, yellow crusting or a temperature
- blisters or open areas that are not healing
- pain that is getting worse rather than better

Out of hours, your emergency contact number will be given by the treating hospital or clinic. In an emergency, call 999.

17 What happens next

Before your treatment, Mr Kumar will go through this information with you again and take your written consent. If anything in this booklet has raised a question, or if anything changes with your health or your medication before then, please let us know.

My questions

Note down anything you want to ask Mr Kumar and bring it to your next appointment.

Notes

Questions or worries?

Please contact the clinic during opening hours. Out of hours, your emergency contact number will be given by the treating hospital. In an emergency, call 999.

Telephone

020 3026 9695

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Stretch mark treatment information leaflet. Version 1.0, October 2026. This booklet is for general information and does not replace a consultation with Mr Kumar.