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Richard P. Charmoy, D.M.D.
Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

135 West End Avenue • Somerville, NJ 08876

Hair: Tips on choosing a physician

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laser hair removal?

No. Downtime is not expected. Though one may have mild redness following the procedure, this normally resolves within a few hours. One is able to apply makeup or exercise following the treatment. Suntanning must be avoided after the treatment and the use of sun block is strongly recommended.

•Are there different types of systems used for hair removal?

There are several types of systems used for hair removal — including the Alexandrite, Diode and ND/YAG lasers, as well as the Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems. The lasers and IPL systems vary in treatment spot sizes, cooling methods, speed and comfort. Be sure to ask the physician about the specifics of the laser or light system that will be used for treatment.

•Does laser hair removal hurt?

The vast majority of patients

tolerate the procedure very well and without any topical anesthetic. There might be mild discomfort associated with the treatment, often described as mild as the snap of a rubber band or a slight stinging sensation.

For sensitive areas, patients can elect to use topical anesthetic cream, which helps to reduce the potential for discomfort. One common type of anesthetic cream is called Elamax. This is available in a 4% or 5% formulation. It is most effective when applied 30-40 minutes prior to the procedure.

•How does one choose a physician or facility?

The physician should offer a private consultation, at which time you should have the time to discuss your goals and expectations and ask questions. Try to avoid using a physician who offers a guarantee or seems to be making unrealistic promises. It is only the physician in the facility who should operate the laser, not a nurse, aesthetician or laser technician.

A physician should own several state-of-the-art hair removal systems to be able to perform the procedure effectively for all patients, especially those with darker skin. The physician ideally should have extensive experience performing laser hair removal — not just by renting a laser one day per month and performing the procedure sporadically. Ask the physician how many laser hair removal procedures he performs per week. The physician should be a member of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery, or another society which concentrates its efforts in studying and making improvements in the field. Try to find a physician who performs other laser procedures, as well, as they will likely have more experience and a deeper understanding of laser technology.

Mitchell Chasin is medical director of Reflections, Center for Skin and Body, Bridgewater. Contact him at (908) 575-1122. Website: www.reflectionscenter.com.

Touch: Child's gift

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If massage is not appropriate, gentle touch can still be used. The best time to perform the massage would be while the baby is awake and works well before nap time or bedtime. It's best to try to do some massage each day for the first nine months of your baby's life.

The massage does not have to cease after that first year but you will discover you will have to make changes appropriate to your growing child. As with all people, children are unique, so there are no set guidelines about how your child will develop or how he or she will respond to the massage. It's important to respect that your baby is becoming a little person with likes and dislikes. The massage time will become more creative based on your child's needs.

When your baby begins to crawl, the massage time will become more playful and you may want to introduce games into the massage. He or she may only sit still long enough to have the foot massaged — but that's OK. Your child may also begin to exercise the right to say "no" and it's important to respect that. This is a wonderful way to teach your child about positive touch. You will also need to adapt your strokes to your child's growing limbs and leave out strokes that are no longer appropriate.

As your child reaches adolescence, massage can be a good way to open up lines of communication during a time when many children may withdraw from their parents. Your daughter or son may even come home one day and offer you a foot massage!

In a time when we have every imaginable toy and gadget available to stimulate our children, it's easy to overlook that the most powerful and lasting stimulation can be brought about through a simple touch. Massage is a wonderful way to stay "in-touch" with your child as he or she grows through the years.

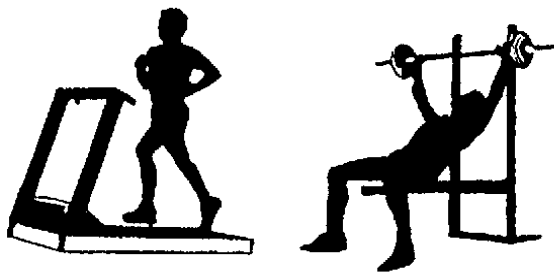
Laurie Frost is a nationally certified massage therapist and a certified newborn and infant massage instructor. She can be reached at her private practice in East Brunswick at: (732) 390-5565.

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