

*Jeri Shuster, M.D., P.A.*  
*and Women's Center, Inc.*

Jeri Shuster, M.D., Fellow of the American College Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
Kathryn Cervi, C.R.N.P., Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner

**LASER HAIR REMOVAL**

1. **THE MODE OF ACTION OF THE TREATMENT:** The laser is a non-invasive light therapy that penetrates the skin and sends energy into the pigment of the hair shaft and surrounding follicle. The heat generated by this process damages the follicle and stops hair production. This causes selective damage to the hair root without damaging the skin, and can be used to treat undesirable hair from almost all parts of the body. Because the laser uses a wide beam that treats dozens of hairs at once, it is now possible to treat larger areas at each treatment.
2. **THE PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS:** Normal hair goes through a growth cycle in three stages: active, transitional, and dormant. The laser works by seeking out and destroying the actively growing hair roots only. At any one time, various percentages of body hair will be in each of the phases, indicating the need for multiple treatments to obtain hair removal. However, the number of treatments needed to obtain complete, permanent hair removal for different anatomical sites is unknown. Although impossible to predict, occasionally a patient can obtain long-term complete hair removal after one or two treatments, while others may respond only after multiple treatments.
3. **RESULTS:** Laser hair removal is appropriate for any area where there is excess hair, except for the eye area. However, because the hair is targeted on the basis of color, the hair must be dark for the laser to be effective and achieve a good result. Very light blonde or white hair does not respond to laser treatment.

There is sometimes no obvious immediate change after the treatment, as the hair that has been destroyed could take 1-2 weeks to actually fall out. Some patients, however, may not experience complete hair loss even after multiple laser procedures. Results will depend on skin and hair type, but almost all patients will achieve some degree of permanent hair reduction. However, since laser treatment is not an exact science, there is no guarantee or assurances that can be given concerning the results of this procedure.

