



THERMAGE

Mark T. Weigel, MD, facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon at The Plastic Surgery and Laser Center at Charlotte Eye Ear Nose and Throat Associates, is pleased to offer the Thermage procedure, also called ThermoLift and ThermoCool, to reduce the signs of aging skin, by lifting and tightening loose and wrinkled skin in the face and neck region.

What is the Thermage procedure? How does the technology work? The Thermage procedure was developed to treat sun damaged and aging face and neck skin through tissue tightening utilizing an advanced radiofrequency device called ThermoCool TC. The device emits radiofrequency energy, heating the dermis, while cooling and protecting the epidermis. It is designed to cause immediate collagen contraction followed by additional collagen production, which continues over a period of several months. There are no incisions necessary and the recovery time is minimal. The result is smoother, tighter skin with a more youthful appearance.

What does the Thermage procedure feel like? With each release of energy via the Thermage treatment tip, you will experience a brief, intense heating sensation as the collagen in the deep layers of your skin is tightened. To protect your skin surface and make the treatment more comfortable, a cooling spray is delivered during each application of the treatment tip. Your physician will discuss and provide analgesic and anesthetic enhancements to make the treatment comfortable.

How long does the Thermage procedure take? Depending on the size of the area treated, the procedure itself may take anywhere from 15 minutes to approximately one hour. Additional time may be required for pre-treatment sedation or anesthesia.

When will I observe results? There is some mild skin tightening noted immediately after the procedure. Additional tightening appears gradually over the next 2 to 6 months.

How many treatments will I need? In the initial clinical trials, all patients were treated in a single treatment session with satisfactory results. Additional studies are being performed to determine if multiple treatments provide better and more consistent results. The benefit of an additional treatment will be discussed at the 6 month follow-up appointment.

Is special care required following the Thermage treatment? In most cases no special care is required following treatment. Some patients elect to utilize a skin moisturizer for the first week. As part of good overall skin care, a sunscreen is also recommended.

When can I return to normal activities? The recovery time following Thermage is minimal. Mild redness and swelling are seen following treatment, but this usually resolves within one to three days.

Is Thermage therapy safe? Overall, Thermage is very safe. While Thermage is a relatively new technology, the incidence of complications or adverse effects has been minimal. Dimpling or scarring of the skin is rare.

How long will the effects of the Thermage procedure last? Recently published studies show that improvements continue for at least six months after a single treatment session. Other studies show that thermal collagen changes can last several years. Additional research is being performed to determine if multiple passes on the face at the initial session, or multiple treatment sessions provide better and longer results.

What changes are noted in the skin after Thermage therapy? Studies have shown that several months after a Thermage treatment there is a new, thicker collagen layer in the dermis of the skin. This additional collagen serves to tighten the skin and lessen wrinkles. The results will vary from patient to patient.

Will Thermage completely replace traditional facelift and laser resurfacing procedures? No. While Thermage is a new, exciting, non-invasive therapy for the treatment of mild to moderate skin laxity and face and neck wrinkles, it has not rendered other procedures such as facelift, browlift, blepharoplasty and laser skin resurfacing obsolete. They each have appropriate indications for use based upon the degree and location of the aging signs for which an individual patient expresses concern. The candidacy for any of these procedures is determined at the initial consultation.

Please call Dr. Mark Weigel at the Plastic Surgery and Laser Center at 704-295-3600 to schedule a consultation concerning the Thermage procedure.