



SHOPPING FOR LASER HAIR REMOVAL

Laser hair removal has hit the mainstream in the UK, which has increased the number of suppliers available in the market.

If you are contemplating laser hair removal for the first time, it can be tempting to 'shop around' for the best deal. You might even consider trying one of the special offers advertised on Groupon and the like.

However, it is important to understand that laser hair removal is not a commodity. There is a vast array of technology and machinery promising to blitz away unwanted hair, but results can vary widely.

At Quinn Clinics, we do see patients who have started courses of laser hair removal elsewhere and been totally disappointed with the results, seeing only small reductions in hair and 'bargain' courses threatening to stretch out indefinitely with additional treatments to see any kind of progress. We also come across too many patients who have had a bad experience elsewhere with burns or irritations.

Here are some important points about laser hair removal which will help you to choose your technology, practitioner and clinic knowledgeably and with the expectation of a good result and a safe experience.

HAIR REMOVAL TECHNOLOGY

The two main systems available for permanent hair reduction are laser and IPL (intense pulsed light).

Both have been available since the mid 90's and involve producing light energy, which is absorbed into the darker pigment of the hair follicle, damaging it and preventing regrowth. Laser machines produce a single, concentrated wavelength of light which is configured to the patient's precise hair and skin colouring. By comparison, IPL produces a broad spectrum of wavelengths (more like a lightbulb) only some of which will be effective and which penetrate less deeply than laser.

IPL systems tend to be a lot cheaper and are a popular choice for beauty and hair salons seeking an additional income stream.

By comparison, proper laser hair removal is a much more significant investment yet it is laser rather than IPL that tends to be favoured by the more reputable skin clinics for a number of very positive reasons.

LASER VS IPL ADVANTAGES

1. **Medical Backing** – Clinical research suggests that laser is more effective than intense pulsed light (IPL) for permanent hair reduction.
2. **Effective Results** - Laser generally requires fewer treatments to achieve a better result than IPL - over 90% of patients have permanent hair reduction after 3-5 sessions.
3. **Precision** - Lasers can selectively target the unwanted hairs while leaving the surrounding skin undamaged.
4. **Speed** – With laser, each pulse takes a fraction of a second and can treat several hairs at a time, making it more suitable for larger body areas and popular with male patients.
5. **Adjustability** - Laser settings can be configured to suit each patient's combination skin and hair colour.
6. **Safety** – Laser is generally considered to be a safer procedure - IPL can cause burns, especially on darker skin tones.
7. **Range** - Lasers are suitable for all skin colours – even dark skin or light hair - whereas IPL is generally only effective on patients with dark hair and light skin (colour contrast).
8. **Comfort** – While IPL can be quite a painful experience, laser is far more comfortable and faster too.
9. **Face or Body** – The efficiency, accuracy and speed of laser makes it a better choice for facial hair removal with less risk of pigmentation or sensitivity compared to IPL.
10. **Regulation** – Laser equipment is regulated as a medical device, which is not so for IPL which is only covered by Health and Safety at Work rules.

Quinn Clinics use the Lumenis Lightsheer system, advanced laser technology for 'gold-standard' results.

LASER / IPL PRACTITIONERS

Both IPL and laser hair removal are entirely unregulated with regard to practitioners, which means that literally anybody could practice without any training or qualifications. This is likely to change in the future, as numerous reports and industry bodies have called for tighter regulation to protect patients. Until then patients are advised to choose their practitioners with care. Look for:

1. **Training** - A practitioner who can show evidence of formal training in laser/IPL hair removal. This is optional on behalf of the practitioner but highly desirable for the patient!
2. **Experience** – Some people have years of experience in hair removal, whereas others might just be starting out. Don't be afraid to ask.
3. **Skin Test** – A good practitioner will insist on a consultation and skin test prior to treatment in order to tune the machine to your skin/hair colour combination and check for any adverse reaction.
4. **Refusal of Treatment** – Always respect any practitioner who refuses treatment for your own safety but do expect an explanation and further advice.

LASER/IPL CLINICS

Again, there are still no legal requirements for premises offering laser hair removal or IPL to be registered beyond the standard HSW (Health and Safety at Work) regulations. However, there are features you can look for which mark out an excellent clinic, including:

1. **CQC Registration** – This is voluntary and requires clinics to meet rigorous standards as well as a not inconsiderable fee. Most salons and even many skin clinics don't bother due to financial cost, rigorous standards and pure administration. Quinn Clinics have registered both clinics and are very proud of our CQC inspection record.
2. **Award-Winning Status** – Has your salon or clinic entered and won for any awards? Quinn Clinics have a 5 star treatment award and WhatClinic customer service awards for 2012, 2013, 2014...
3. **Reviews** – Check Google local listings and independent sites such as whatclinic to see what other patients have said.
4. **Recommendations** – Do you have friends or family who can give you any advice on what they've experienced? It's worth knowing that 100% of clients would recommend to family and friends.
5. **History** - How long has your clinic been established? The longer the better! Quinn Clinics was established in 2006.
6. **Ownership** – It's worth considering who owns the company. Quinn Clinics is an independent company owned by founder, Dr John Quinn, which means that its patients health and safety is at the heart of the business
7. **Facilities** – Laser or IPL should be provided in a properly equipped room, which is scrupulously clean as well as private and comfortable.

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