

**SPRINGFIELD ENT & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY**  
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## **Information About Thermage® Treatment for Tightening and Contouring of the Facial and Neck Areas**

Thermage® is a new procedure that offers the benefit of facial and neck rejuvenation without surgery. It is intended for patients who are not quite ready for a face lift or who do not desire a surgical procedure. Time is at a premium in today's business world and busy society, and patients appreciate that Thermage® requires *no recovery or down time*. One may resume full activity and normal skin care immediately after treatment.

Further information on this treatment may also be obtained on the internet by visiting [www.thermage.com](http://www.thermage.com).

### **Goals of Thermage®**

As with any aesthetic treatment, one should understand what Thermage® can offer. It is intended to correct mild to moderate looseness of the skin of the face and upper neck. It can elevate the eyebrows, tighten the jawline, and improve the appearance of creases beside the nose and mouth. Also, it can lift and reduce fullness underneath the jaw. In general, it helps correct face and neck laxity that, if more severe, would require a face lift, forehead lift, or neck liposuction. Unlike laser resurfacing, it is not intended to treat skin wrinkles and pigment problems, although it may help with acne scarring. Patients with prominent wrinkles, deep acne scars, or other problems may require alternate treatments such as chemical peel, laser resurfacing, or surgery.

### **How does Thermage work?**

The effects of age, gravity, and sun cause the collagen in skin to lose some of its organized structure and to relax. As a result, the face and neck sag, creating wrinkles and overall laxity. Thermage® acts to tighten the collagen in skin to counter these undesirable effects of age. A hand piece is held against a small area of skin. Radiofrequency energy is then applied to cause tightening of the collagen fibers. At the same time, the tip of the device is cooled by a cryogen spray to prevent heating at the skin surface. A small area of skin is treated with each pulse and then the hand piece is moved to the next spot to be treated. The same area may be treated more than once during the procedure, depending on the amount and type of tightening that is desired.

Thermage® is unlike either chemical peels or laser treatment of the face. These other treatment techniques cause a controlled injury to the surface of the skin in order to reduce wrinkles or uneven pigmentation and to improve surface texture. The carbon dioxide laser also causes some collagen tightening. Because peels and laser induce dermal and epidermal injury, time is required to regenerate a new skin surface. They require a convalescent period of 1-2 weeks with persistent redness with the carbon dioxide laser for up to several months. Thermage® tightens collagen without causing injury to the skin surface. There is no down time, and one resumes normal activity and use of cosmetics immediately following the procedure.

### **Is Thermage® right for everyone?**

Thermage® is intended to treat mild to moderate laxity of the face and neck but may not be the optimal choice for some individuals:

- Skin wrinkles, uneven pigmentation, and texture irregularities are best treated with chemical peels, laser resurfacing, filling agents (such as collagen) and Botox®.
- Severe laxity remains best corrected with surgical procedures such as face lift or forehead lift. Patients like this can expect only modest benefit from Thermage® and might be disappointed with nonsurgical treatment.
- Excess fat under the chin and jaw may require liposuction in addition to Thermage®.

### How soon will results appear?

Everyone responds somewhat differently to Thermage®. Many people notice a difference immediately while others notice gradual improvement for up to 6 months after treatment. Continued tightening can be expected in most all patients about half a year after treatment. Some people have dramatic results; in others, the benefits are more subtle.

### Is anesthesia required?

Patients should note a feeling of heat with discomfort, but should find the procedure to be very tolerable. In most cases, Thermage® is performed with oral pain and sedation medication given before the procedure. Local and topical anesthetics are generally not used. These options will be discussed at the time of consultation to find the right choice for each person.

### On the day of treatment

- The procedure is performed in the office and takes approximately 30 – 90 minutes, depending on the size of the area treated.
- The face is gently cleansed and allowed to dry.
- A grid pattern is applied to the face to mark the areas of treatment. This is removed before leaving the office.
- A cool gel is applied to the treatment area and the hand piece is placed on the skin and a treatment pulse applied.
- Some areas of the face will receive only one treatment pulse while other areas will receive more.
- Afterward, the patient is discharged and may resume normal activity, skin care, and use of cosmetics. No special care is required. The patient will require a driver if pain or sedative medication are given.

### Risks and complications

Thermage® is an *extremely safe procedure*. However any medical treatment poses some potential risk - however unlikely. Some of these might include:

- **Injury to treated tissue** – Thermage® achieves its benefit by applying radiofrequency energy to the skin. There is always the unlikely potential for injury due to this. One could experience a burn or injury to structures such as nerves in the area of treatment.
- **Dimpling** - due to uneven contraction of tissues.
- **Asymmetry** – if one side or part of the face responded differently than others. (Of course, most everyone's face and body are somewhat asymmetric)
- **Minimal change** – each person responds to Thermage® and one may have a dramatic effect while others may have very subtle change. Some patients may not see a result for up to 6 months after treatment.
- **Activation of fever blisters** – these are due to the herpes virus and can be activated by many things that stimulate an area, such as sun, chemical peels, or laser resurfacing.
- **Need for additional or other type of treatment** – one may need future re-treatment with Thermage® or other procedures such as liposuction or a face or neck lift.

*Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in your health care! Please let us know how we may make your treatment experience more pleasant*

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