



CANADIAN DERMATOLOGY ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT USE OF LASERS

The Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) understands the use of lasers simplifies many cosmetic and dermatologic procedures, is effective for treating a large number of cutaneous lesions, and is the preferred treatment for an increasing number of other conditions. The advantage of using lasers is the selective targeting of skin components while minimizing damage to surrounding tissue.

In the interest of patient safety, the CDA strongly believes that individuals must first be properly diagnosed before undergoing laser treatment. At times, skin cancers are inappropriately treated with lasers leading to delayed diagnosis and inadequate treatment. Furthermore, lasers are very powerful devices and improper use by insufficiently trained personnel may increase the risk of burns, scars, permanent pigmentary changes, and eye damage. Dermatologists' services are often sought to deal with the adverse outcomes of laser treatments. Corrective treatments can be painful and may require repeat follow up visits. This process can be very stressful for patients.

The CDA strongly recommends that the use of lasers in cosmetic and dermatologic procedures be restricted to physicians and personnel under the guidance of physicians who have a greater understanding of the skin, its structure and the implications of laser use on the skin.

In the interest of protecting Canadians, the CDA encourages those individuals seeking a cosmetic or dermatologic procedure that includes the use of lasers to speak to a Dermatologist or other physician whose qualifications in laser treatment were acquired by residency training and preceptorship or appropriate course work.