

Don't Be Scarred!

Acne scars can be scary. How to make sure a messy breakout doesn't leave its mark:

Superficial (red and flat) scars will eventually go away, says dermatologist David Goldberg of Skin Laser and Surgery Specialists of New York and New Jersey. To speed things up, get a Pulsed Dye laser treatment from your dermatologist. "You'll have a black- and-blue mark for a week," says Goldberg. "Then 50 percent improvement." For ice-pick (small and deep) and saucerized (wide and shallow) scars, try:

* Surgical excision

The scar is cut out. Stitches last a week; redness, a month.
Can improve scars by 50 percent.

* Cool touch laser

Goldberg's favorite, this new technology creates a deep, unseen wound that stimulates collagen production, which helps fill in scars. It takes five to 10 minutes, needs not anesthetic, and yields up to 70 percent improvement in three to five treatments.

* Erbium laser

As effective as the Cool Touch, this laser also injures the skin to produce new collagen, but it leaves a weeping wound. The one-time treatment is widely available. \$1,000-\$6,000

* Dermabrasion

The skin surface is basically sanded off, so smoother skin can grow back. Expect a bleeding, raw wound for a week and redness for several months, then up to 30 percent improvement.

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