

Integrating CO₂RE Intima into your OBGYN Practice

Falguni Patel, M.D.

*Obstetrician/Gynecologist,
Women's Healthcare & Wellness
Aberdeen, NJ*

*Clinical Instructor,
University of Medicine and
Dentistry of New Jersey/ Robert
Wood Johnson Medical School
Department of Obstetrics,
Gynecology, and Reproductive
Science*

New Brunswick, NJ

As a board-certified gynecologist with a special interest in feminine rejuvenation, I treat each patient from the inside out and the outside in. My patients range in age from 15 to their late 80's. When they visit Women's Healthcare & Wellness, patients seek routine gynecological care, as well as treatment for menopausal changes, intimacy issues, stress urinary incontinence (SUI), painful sex, and cosmetic improvements to their genitalia. Syneron-Candela's CO₂RE Intima complements my practice beautifully because I can continue providing my usual care, now with some alternative and adjunctive options.

I had been researching the different women's intimate health devices, including those which employ Radiofrequency, Erbium or CO₂ laser energy. I have used all three technologies in my practice, and based on my experience and the medical literature, I felt the CO₂ laser was the best option. The CO₂RE Intima CO₂ laser is part of such a versatile platform that I knew it would cover many of the aesthetic and functional needs of my practice.

Patient Population

Currently, I treat three to five women per week with CO₂RE Intima. Most are peri- or post-menopausal women who are concerned about dryness, dyspareunia and other impacts of menopause. I also use this device to treat women who are interested in cosmetic improvement to their external genitalia. Other patients include those looking to treat post-childbirth laxity issues and/or to relieve labial agglutination. There is, however, some overlap between groups. For example, most patients who come to me for menopausal

dryness and itching also have dyspareunia as well. The benefits can also spill over across groups. Many of my menopausal patients have come back after the second treatment and have stated that they like the external appearance of their vagina because they now have fewer wrinkles.

These medical and cosmetic issues often come up organically during visits. I always ask my patients about their work, family life, marriage and menstrual periods, and this segues naturally into their sex life and/or other concerns. As an example, if a patient expresses concern over post-partum looseness and less sensation during sexual relations, I will discuss Kegel exercises and many will respond "been there, done that, and it's not working". Next I will bring up biofeedback and surgery—and then finish the conversation with the mention of CO₂RE Intima. My menopausal patients typically will make negative comments about their sexual activity or lack thereof, so I also make them aware of this treatment option. Patients have been very receptive when the treatment is discussed as an alternative to existing options based on their concerns.

Patient Experience and Treatment Cost

My experience and that of my patients with CO₂RE Intima has been very positive. It's a quick procedure with minimal discomfort. I'm noticing the vulva tissue looking firmer and tighter and the introitus is pinker and more pliable after the first treatment. The vaginal canal, too, is thickened, pink, and healthy looking after the first treatment. After the second and third treatment, the tissue is visibly healthier.

There is not that much of a learning curve. The vagina is very forgiving as it goes through the wear and tear of childbirth. There is no pain associated with the procedure. For external treatments, I apply lidocaine and start treatment at 50 J/cm².

Patients with symptoms of vaginal atrophy are walking around with smiles on their faces because they don't feel dry or irritated any longer. As an added benefit, though not the focus of the treatment, I have also had 100% of my patients who have been struggling with urinary incontinence tell me that it has almost ceased after their second treatment. When treatments are painful or ineffective, we typically see a higher no-show rate. However, there is never a cancellation with this treatment.

I charge between \$900 and \$1,000 per treatment. If patients pre-pay for a package of three treatments, I provide a 20% discount. I have also bundled the CO₂RE Intima with platelet rich plasma, G-spot amplification to allow tolerability of sex for patients with dyspareunia as well as enhanced pleasure.

Marketing and ROI

As far as marketing the procedure, we have a banner at the entrance of the office to notify my patients of this new treatment. I have posted on Facebook and on our website that we now offer CO₂RE Intima and have sent emails to existing patients about the new offering. I also notified my colleagues and other health care professionals in the area that I now provide CO₂RE Intima for many women's health issues. I have gotten many referrals as a result. I'm also hosting a Women's Empowerment Event in the near future where existing and new patients will be invited to walk through the facility and learn about many advances in aesthetic and energy based medicine, including feminine health.

I think the CO₂RE Platform/CO₂RE Intima is a great investment. The goal with any equipment purchase is to have it be capable of multiple applications. Here you have a device that can address facial aging (wrinkles, dyschromia), external female genital cosmetic improvement and internal as well as vaginal health issues (the symptoms of vaginal atrophy, painful sex, etc.). I'm also able to use this device to perform labiaplasty and vaginoplasty, and to excise condylomas and other growths. I would recommend CO₂RE Intima to other gynecologists, as it can help with many of our patients' common issues.