MICRONEEDLING: EXPERIENCED HANDS CAN IMPROVE THE FACE
*Treatment from a trained doctor provides better results than at-home devices*

SAN DIEGO (Feb. 16, 2018) — When it comes to microneedling, not all treatments are created equal. At-home devices won’t provide the same effects as an in-office treatment from a board-certified dermatologist.

“Microneedling that delivers significant, long-lasting results is a medical treatment,” says board-certified dermatologist Tina Alster, MD, FAAD, a professor of dermatology at Georgetown University Medical Center. “That means it should be performed by a trained, experienced physician, like a board-certified dermatologist, in a medical office.”

Microneedling involves puncturing the skin with thin needles to create tiny wounds, triggering the skin’s repair mechanisms and stimulating collagen production. According to Dr. Alster, this treatment can improve the appearance of large pores, fine lines and wrinkles, scars, and stretch marks.

To achieve these results, Dr. Alster says, doctors use sterile needles that puncture deep enough to cause bleeding. On the other hand, she says, roller devices used for microneedling in the home or at nonmedical spas have shorter, duller needles. These devices are not meant to penetrate the skin, she says, so while they may stimulate blood flow to create a temporary brightening effect, they can’t deliver the same results as a microneedling treatment from a doctor.

Furthermore, Dr. Alster says, at-home microneedling devices are difficult to clean and maintain, with needles that dull quickly. If these device do penetrate the skin, she says, they could do so in a way that leads to injury or infection, rather than rejuvenation.

“The results of your microneedling treatment will depend on the skill of the person performing it,” Dr. Alster says. “If you’re interested in microneedling, you should see a board-certified dermatologist or another trained doctor who has experience with the procedure and knows how to deliver the best results.”

Because microneedling does not involve the delivery of heat, Dr. Alster says, patients with a wide variety of skin tones can receive the treatment without the risk of pigmentation issues that accompanies laser and light procedures, which involve heat. Microneedling is not for everyone, however, as those with inflammation or infection — such as people with active acne or cold sores, respectively — should not receive the treatment, she says.

Microneedling typically causes mild skin redness that lasts for a few days, Dr. Alster says, although it may linger for as long as a week. Patients should protect their skin from the sun after a microneedling session, she says, but they may start wearing makeup as soon as the next day.

While some doctors have investigated the possibility of pairing microneedling with other treatments, such as the application of platelet-rich plasma, Dr. Alster says there is not enough research to show that these methods make the procedure more effective. While she does utilize PRP to treat hair loss, she says, she has found that microneedling alone is sufficient to provide her patients with the skin improvements they desire.

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“When performed by a qualified physician, microneedling is a great way to improve the skin’s appearance,” Dr. Alster says. “If you’re considering this treatment, don’t take matters into your own hands with an at-home device — talk to a board-certified dermatologist.”

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Contacts
Nicole DiVito, (847) 240-1746, ndivito@aad.org
Amanda Jacobs, (847) 240-1714, ajacobs@aad.org

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