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COSMETIC TREATMENTS

15 Things That Happen to Your Skin After In-Office Microneedling

Here's the real deal.

By Danielle Fontana Dooley, Senior Digital Editor and Elise Minton Tabin · May 3, 2021



Microneedling has continued to rank at the top of skin-rejuvenating treatment lists for quite a while now. Not only can it improve the look and feel of the skin, but it can also work wonders on reducing acne scars, lines and wrinkles. And while at-home microneedling is a great way to gently rev up more collagen in the skin, in-office microneedling is where the real magic happens.

As to be expected, a microneedling treatment administered by your physician is a bit more invasive than a sink-side experience with a dermal roller. As such, there are a few things to take note of, especially when it comes to what to expect once the skin-transforming treatment is complete.

1/15

Your skin will be red.

Davie, FL dermatologist Marianna Blyumin-Karasik, MD says it's totally normal for your skin to be red after you've had a microneedling treatment, but the majority of the redness should subside within 24 hours. By the next day, skin will look pink, but will normalize in a matter of days.

However, if a more aggressive treatment was done, the redness may linger for a bit longer. "I use the Infini radio-frequency microneedling device in my office to treat acne scars, fine lines and wrinkles around the eyes, and to lift and firm the skin," says Seattle dermatologist Jennifer Reichel, MD. "Directly after the treatment, skin looks bright red from the heat, with an almost sunburn-like feeling, but it's not all that bad." Keeping skin hydrated can help take down the redness, too.



2/15

You'll need to pause your usual skin-care regimen.

Short Hills, NJ facial plastic surgeon Alexander Ovchinsky, MD says to avoid any actives such as retinol, retin-A, vitamin C, AHAs or BHAs immediately after a microneedling treatment. "Sticking with a moisturizer made to speed up the healing of the skin and sunscreen is a must," he says. Sticking to comforting, gentle formulas is a good idea for a few days post-treatment.

New York plastic surgeon **Elie Levine, MD** agrees, noting abrasive cleansers and scrubs, along with cleansers containing glycolic or hydroxy acids, should be avoided, as should any scented skin-care products. "You can also use hyaluronic acid to help stimulate collagen production post-treatment but one that isn't harsh on the skin," says Dr. Levine. "Good moisturization is key."



3/15

Your skin may feel tight and dry.

Chicago dermatologist Jordan C. Carqueville, MD says skin will likely feel dehydrated after the treatment, and therefore will require intense moisture in order to heal. "After the procedure, I recommend applying a hyaluronic acid serum or emollients, such as petrolatum or lanolin ointment, for two to three days. After a few days, it is OK to resume regular moisturizers as tolerated."



4/15

Bruising is a possibility.

Depending on the length of the needle used and the number of times it is pressed across the treatment area, Dr. Levine says bruising on the face, along with some minor bleeding, can occur. “Also, your skin may feel warm, tight, and itchy for a short while, but this should subside in 12-48 hours,” he says.



5/15

Pinpoint bleeding isn't uncommon.

According to Dr. Blyumin-Karasik, it's normal for there to be some pinpoint bleeding on the skin from having the needles inserted into the skin. “Because some microneedling treatments are more invasive, like Infini, we use topical numbing, local anesthetic with mesoneedles, and oral or IV sedation,” adds Dr. Reichel.



6/15

You might notice some slight peeling or shedding.

New York dermatologist Sapna Palep, MD says skin can exfoliate for up to a week post-treatment, which may result in some very mild peeling. But don't worry: “This is a good sign, because it shows cell turnover and new skin being generated,” she adds.

Dr. Blyumin-Karasik says this exfoliation will likely begin the day after your treatment and make skin look a little dull. “The skin becomes pink and sandy-dry and starts gradually exfoliating for the next few days,” she explains.



7/15

You might have an allergic reaction.

If you're coupling in-office microneedling with radio frequency, New York dermatologist Rita Linkner, MD says she's seen some instances of an allergic reaction. "This is likely due to the topical anesthetic that was used and then microneedled into the skin. Gridding, like a waffling of the skin, can persist for 36 hours, especially if you are someone who is very sensitive to trauma in the skin." (If your skin blows up after a bug bite, you're in this camp!)



8/15

Your skin will be sensitive to the sun.

Because the top layer of skin, or the stratum corneum, has been disrupted, Dr. Carqueville notes the skin will be sensitive to the sun. "I recommend avoiding direct sun exposure for a month, as the stratum corneum takes 28 days to replenish itself from the mechanical injury of microneedling." If that's not feasible, try to completely avoid the sun for the first few days of healing, "and after two or three days, it is OK to resume use of sunscreens." However, she notes that hats and sunscreen should be used consistently for a month, "and going forward to protect your investment."



9/15

Your skin may be swollen.

"The skin may be slightly swollen the next day due to the mechanical injury of microneedling," says Dr. Carqueville. Dr. Ovchinsky adds that while normal, you might notice some swelling and mild bruising around the under eyes.

"Depending on how aggressive—or how deep—the treatment was, mild swelling for one to three days is normal," says Dr. Palep, who adds that using a cold compress will help take down the inflammation.



10/15

Your skin may feel rough to the touch.

Directly after a microneedling treatment (and even in the coming days post-procedure), your skin may feel a little different than normal and a bit rough when you touch it. There may be some swelling and bruising, too. Santa Monica, CA dermatologist Ava Shamban, MD says that the swelling can range anywhere from mild to severe, although it is more frequently mild. “But it really depends on the type of microneedling done. Taking an antihistamine beforehand helps, too.”



11/15

There may be some minimally visible marks.

Because microneedling makes hundreds of tiny safe yet controlled microinjuries on the surface of the skin, it's not uncommon to see some very small marks on the skin after the procedure has been performed. However, Dr. Palep says there's no need to worry, whatever you see on your skin is short-lived at most. “These marks may be visible for a few days, but clear very quickly when the microneedling is done with PRP.”



12/15

Your skin will require serious protection.

Immediately following treatment and for the first day afterwards, Dr. Ovchinsky says it's crucial to protect your skin as much as possible. “Use a protective balm like Aquaphor to create a barrier and to prevent excess moisture loss from the skin,” he recommends.



13/15

You may break out.

If you're prone to breaking out, you'll definitely want to let your doctor know beforehand because microneedling can cause breakouts. This is especially the case if there are active lesions on the surface—the treatment may make them worse. While it can work wonders at improving acne scars, microneedling can actually spread bacteria in the skin, making breakouts worse.



14 /15

Your skin will begin to glow.

After about five days, Dr. Blyumin-Karasik says you should expect noticeably smoother, glowier and clearer skin that's ready to be displayed. However, it's also a critical time to care for your freshly wounded skin. Sunscreen and a mild moisturizer are absolute musts for proper recovery.



15/15

Healing time will differ depending on your treatment.

There is a variety of factors that may affect healing time, but Dr. Blyumin-Karasik says a main one is whether your doctor also used platelet-rich plasma in your treatment, aka a "Vampire Facial." If so, Dr. Blyumin-Karasik says your healing time will be faster, involve less redness and less time shedding. Another benefit to PRP with microneedling: "It also boosts texture-improving results," she adds.

