**Microdermabrasion Side Effects: What to Expect, Risks, Recovery Time and Aftercare**

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* Microdermabrasion is a form of physical exfoliation that is safe for all skin tones and types.
* The possible side effects of microdermabrasion are mild and temporary, and generally clear up within several hours to one day.
* Those with active skin infections or a tendency to scar should avoid Microdermabrasion.
* There is no downtime following a microdermabrasion treatment, and additional sessions can be scheduled after one week.

[Microdermabrasion](https://dermcollective.com/microdermabrasion/) is a skin rejuvenation procedure that physically exfoliates the skin by peeling away the [stratum corneum](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3050026/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), or outer layer of skin. The body’s subsequent [wound healing](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15692465%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) forms a [new epidermis](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK535383/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), effectively removing blemishes, such as scars and blotchy pigmentation, from the skin’s surface.

Despite being an ablative cosmetic procedure in which a layer of skin is physically removed, the risk of side effects is low, and those side effects that may appear are mild and temporary.

“Depending on the facility and the provider performing microdermabrasion, this procedure is generally considered safe. Microdermabrasion can be used on [all skin types and tones](https://dermcollective.com/what-is-my-skin-type/) with little to no risk.

Although it physically exfoliates the skin’s outer layer, it does so without damaging the epidermis. Because the epidermis [isn’t compromised](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5608132/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), there are no long-term complications arising from this procedure.

As a non-invasive procedure, clients do not need to be topically anesthetized before treatment.

**Microdermabrasion risks and contraindications**

Microdermabrasion should be avoided if you are:

* Experiencing an active skin infection, such as herpes simplex virus, varicella zoster virus, human papillomavirus or impetigo
* Prone to hypertrophic or raised scarring

Inform your microdermabrasion provider if you have certain skin conditions, such as [rosacea](https://dermcollective.com/rosacea/) or telangiectasia. In some cases, they may recommend an [alternative treatment](https://dermcollective.com/what-is-microdermabrasion/) to rejuvenate your skin.

**Diamond-tipped Microdermabrasion.**

**Diamond-tipped**microdermabrasion uses a hand piece that buffs the skin. The technician controls the depth of ablation based on how much pressure is applied. Because the pressure exerted during treatment with a diamond tip is easily controlled by the operator the risk of damage to the epidermis is highly reduced making the diamond tip method of microdermabrasion the safest form there is available.

**Is microdermabrasion safe for dark skin?**

Microdermabrasion is safe for individuals of all skin types and tones, including those with dark skin. However, patients with dark skin who undergo microdermabrasion may be slightly more at risk of developing mild and temporary side effects.

Most procedures, as a rule, carry greater risk of adverse effects for darker skin types. To avoid a negative outcome, it is important to ensure your provider has personal experience with this device and your particular skin tone.”

**Microdermabrasion Side Effects**

Many patients undergo microdermabrasion without any adverse side effects. If they do manifest, they are mild and short-lived, and typically last no longer than a few hours to a day.

**Skin redness**

The physical act of exfoliation, or the friction between your skin and the hand piece, [increases blood flow](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11737128%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) in capillaries close to the surface. As the capillaries dilate, they become visible through the skin, causing skin redness, or erythema.

Your skin is likely to return to its normal complexion a few hours after microdermabrasion. If you have [sensitive skin](https://dermcollective.com/sensitive-skin/), you may notice skin redness lasting for slightly longer than a day.

**Tenderness and sensitivity**

Although gentle, microdermabrasion still wounds the skin by removing its surface layer. Your skin may exhibit some of the same signs of sunburn, such as becoming more tender and sensitive to external stimuli and touch. Feelings of sensitivity will diminish within hours of treatment.

**Bruising and broken capillaries**

Some bruising may be visible after microdermabrasion treatment and is due to the pressure generated by the hand piece’s suction attachment. You may be more likely to bruise if you are taking blood thinners, are treating an area with naturally thin skin (such as the eye area) or have thin skin in general.

Similarly, over exfoliation or applying excessive pressure with the microdermabrasion hand piece may break the capillaries below your skin’s surface. When combined with the suction effect of the device’s vacuum, the broken capillaries are brought closer to the skin’s surface and become more visible.

While some bruising is unavoidable, its severity is dependent on the skill of the device’s operator. Like other side effects, bruising should clear up within hours to a day after treatment. Likewise, your propensity for broken capillaries may increase in the hours and days following microdermabrasion.

**Petechiae**

Small coloured spots, called [petechiae](https://www.bmj.com/content/352/bmj.i1285%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), may present on your skin after microdermabrasion. “Petechiae are a medical term for small, red marks under the skin’s surface. It is likely due to the procedure causing minor breaks in superficial blood vessels of the face.

Like bruising and broken capillaries, petechiae is typically a side effect of prolonged contact between the microdermabrasion device and the skin, or as a result of the vacuum attachment being used at too high a pressure.

While common, petechiae is only a minor cosmetic concern that can often be concealed using makeup after your skin begins to heal – roughly 24 hours after your procedure. Signs of petechiae may remain for up to two weeks after treatment.

**Sun sensitivity**

Because microdermabrasion strips away the outer layer of skin, the layers beneath are exposed to external factors, such as the sun. As a result, your skin is more susceptible to photo-damage and can more easily sunburn as it heals.

You can expect your photosensitivity to last for about three weeks.

**Dry skin**

You may experience some [dry](https://dermcollective.com/dry-skin-causes/), flaky or itchy skin in the immediate days following microdermabrasion.

If you have [oily](https://dermcollective.com/oily-skin-causes/) or [combination](https://dermcollective.com/combination-skin/) skin, dry skin may not be as apparent, but you may notice a temporary reduction in oil after a microdermabrasion session.

After a few days of aftercare and adhering to a moisturizing skin care regimen, any dryness should clear up and your skin should return to normal.

**Rash**

Skin rashes and infections following microdermabrasion are rare and typically limited to salons and spas that fail to properly sanitise the hand piece. If an infected patient was treated and the hand piece was not fully sterilized afterward, this infection may be transferred to you.

The treatment for rashes and infections depends on the specific type of infection transferred to you, such as acne. Going to a professional therapist and clean and safe salon can minimize risk of infection.

**Pigment changes**

Some clients, especially those with darker skin tones, may notice some temporary pigment changes or skin discoloration following microdermabrasion. There may also be some [hyperpigmentation](https://dermcollective.com/hyperpigmentation/), or patches of darker skin, after the procedure.

If your skin tone is not restored after healing, your doctor may recommend or prescribe topical, ointments, creams or other procedures.

**Can Microdermabrasion Cause Breakouts?**

If you previously had a skin infection, such as cold sores, it may be reactivated by microdermabrasion. To reduce the risk of having a breakout, inform your provider during consultation. If possible, you may be provided with medication to help prevent a recurrence.

**Can you get microdermabrasion with an active acne breakout?**

Acne is a skin infection caused by bacteria that grow in clogged pores. Microdermabrasion can cause acne lesions to burst open and spread the infection across your skin, potentially exacerbating an acne infection. As such, microdermabrasion should be avoided if you have an active acne breakout.

**Recovery Time**

There is no downtime or recovery time after a microdermabrasion session. Side effects, if they present, are mild and temporary and do not cause a significant impact on daily life. Additionally, the lack of required sedatives or topical anaesthesia during treatment means you can return to your normal schedule immediately after an appointment.

**Microdermabrasion aftercare**

After a microdermabrasion session, your therapist will apply a moisturizer to the treated area. This moisturizer will help hydrate your skin to reduce the likelihood of adverse side effects or limit the effect of any that do present.

For one day after treatment, avoid using any harsh skin care products, such as [chemical peels](https://dermcollective.com/chemical-peels/), and topical acne products. Include a moisturizer to your skin care routine if you are not already doing so.

Avoid direct sunlight for 24–48 hours after microdermabrasion because of the skin’s increased sensitivity to the sun’s harmful UV radiation. In addition, use liberal amounts of sunscreen with at least SPF 30 protection for about three weeks following a session.

**How to Prepare for Microdermabrasion**

A therapist in a salon performs Microdermabrasion. During your first consultation, your therapist will ask you questions about your medical history and your use of medications and cosmetics. In general, you should refrain from:

* [Physical or chemical exfoliation](https://dermcollective.com/chemical-exfoliation/) for 3–5 days before treatment
* Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, (NSAIDs) for 1 week before treatment
* [Filler](https://dermcollective.com/dermal-fillers/) or Botox injections for 3–4 days before treatment
* [Accutane](https://dermcollective.com/accutane-for-acne/) (isotretinoin) treatment for 6 months before treatment
* Tanning or waxing for 1 week before treatment

You should also alert your provider to any aluminium allergies you may have.

Before the procedure, the treatment area will be cleansed to remove any debris or dirt from the surface. You may also be required to wear protective eyewear to protect your eyes from irritation.

During the procedure, the hand piece will be passed over each treatment area up to three times. Depending on the size of the treatment area, the entire procedure will last between 30–60 minutes.

**How often can you undergo microdermabrasion?**

Improvements to the skin following a microdermabrasion session are [mild but clinically significant](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20024871%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). Despite the limited efficacy, patients are [generally pleased](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11298700%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) with the visible results, although repeated and consistent sessions are needed to maintain the effects of skin rejuvenation.

Four to six microdermabrasion sessions are generally required for [best results](https://dermcollective.com/microdermabrasion-results/). Clients who require more dramatic skin rejuvenation, such as those with severely photo damaged skin, may require up to 16 treatments in a course and then maintenance treatments monthly.

As microdermabrasion is a safe and gentle procedure, patients may undergo a [follow-up procedure](https://dermcollective.com/microdermabrasion-how-often/) after one week. Adhering to a consistent treatment plan that allows your skin enough time to heal between sessions is crucial to obtaining ideal results. “Risks for side effects are increased if the procedure is performed too frequently and if the recommended follow-up sessions are not respected, the procedure effects will be reduced.

Microdermabrasion is a cosmetic treatment with an excellent safety profile for people of all skin types and colours. When compared to other forms of physical exfoliation, microdermabrasion requires no numbing, downtime or recovery period, and can be safely performed in a salon.

Potential side effects following a microdermabrasion session are limited. Clients may experience mild skin redness, tenderness, bruising or petechiae, each of which clears up within a maximum of one day after treatment.

Adhering to proper aftercare, including frequent moisturisation and protection from sun exposure, will minimize the effects of the skin’s photosensitivity and dryness. In rare cases, rashes and pigment changes can be treated with topical cosmetics if they don’t resolve on their own.

Clients who undergo microdermabrasion can expect a simple, quick and gentle procedure to rejuvenate the skin, with little risk of significant adverse reactions.