



Unwritten in ink

REGRETTABLE TATTOOS DON'T HAVE TO LAST A LIFETIME, SAYS **RITA PORECCA** FROM THE SYDNEY PERMANENT MAKEUP CENTRE. CAITLIN BISHOP REPORTS.

With a range of removal techniques available, tattoos are no longer the lifetime lasting brands they once were. Today, skin grafting, dermabrasion, IPL and laser treatments can all help remove or disguise the appearance of those ink-stained decisions. While these are all established treatments for tattoo removal, a new procedure is offering comparable results with minimal side effects.

'For those who might have grown out of their tattoos, and no longer want them, the Skinial Non Laser Tattoo Removal system can leave the skin ink free, without the risk of scarring associated with laser tattoo removal,' says Rita Porecca from Sydney Permanent Makeup Centre. Porecca, who is well known for her artistry in permanent makeup, meets plenty of people who have fallen out of love with tattoos they had in their youth and introduced the Skinial system to her clinic to meet the rising demand for tattoo removal.

According to Porecca, Skinial uses a micro pigmentation device with a weak solution of lactic acid to trigger the body's natural immune system. The pigmentation device targets clusters of up to 20 small spots in the tattoo at one time, releasing the solution into each site. The lactic acid

eliminates macrophages (defence mechanism cells) from the large-volume colour particles, which, up until this point, have encased the particles of colour, shielding them from the body's immune system.

With the macrophages removed, the body recognises the ink as foreign, prompting the immune system to 'flush' the rejected skin cells and colour molecules to the skin's surface, where they aggregate to form a scab and ultimately fall off. Because the body naturally produces lactic acid to maintain energy production during exercise, any residues left after treatment will be easily metabolised.

The individual spots targeted during treatment are approximately 0.5 x 0.8 cm in size and around 1mm is abraded from the top layer of skin. This means large tattoos will need a number of treatments, spaced several months apart, in order to remove the entire tattoo. However, because of the minimal abrasion, the level of discomfort felt by patients during the treatment is minimised, and the risk of scarring reduced.

'In my experience the Skinial method of tattoo removal can erase all kinds of shapes and colours of tattoos. Usually,

the treatment causes less discomfort than tattooing itself. However, the level of discomfort varies depending on the patient and the treatment area,' says Porecca.

'This procedure reduces the risk for scars enormously because small wounds usually heal without scars.'

The time it takes to heal in between treatments varies between individuals and depends on the client's skin type and the strength of their immune system. Healing typically takes between six and 10 weeks, with redness persisting in some patients. With comprehensive aftercare instructions and scar care products available, Porecca recommends her clients regularly moisturise the treatment area once the scar has detached in order to deliver nutrients and accelerate healing. Only when the healing process is advanced enough, will she continue with the next treatment.

Porecca warns all her patients that larger tattoos present a greater risk of scarring and those with deep or uneven penetration can leave a shadow on the skin after removal.

'Cases where previous laser treatments have been unsuccessful or have resulted in permanent scarring are more difficult, and are assessed individually to establish if Skinial treatment is worthwhile,' she says.

Nor is the procedure suitable for those prone to hypertrophic or keloid scarring. For most patients, however, Porecca believes the Skinial method represents a real step forward for those looking for an effective means of erasing past mistakes. **csbm**



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02 9569 7799

follow us on

Level 1, 157 Great North Road
Five Dock NSW 2046
Email: info@spmuc.com.au
Web: www.spmuc.com.au

