

## Scalp Micro-Pigmentation (SMP)

### What is Scalp Micro-Pigmentation (SMP)?

- SMP is a medical-grade tattoo of the scalp used to create the appearance of more hair in areas of thinning or that are bald.

### How is SMP Performed?

- Prior to beginning SMP sessions, you will need to arrange a thorough consultation with the doctor to best determine the pattern, desired effect, and goals of treatment. The doctor will also evaluate you for conditions such as psoriasis, eczema or active infections that may not allow for SMP to be performed.
- There are a few methods that can be used during SMP to achieve different looks. Consultation is especially useful to determine which tattooing method(s) will best achieve your desired result.
- Sessions are generally performed at least 2 weeks apart to allow time for exfoliation and settling of the ink. The ink dots deposited after day 1 are always slightly less sharp after the following weeks. Patients often need 3 sessions to get the desired result.
- You will be given local anesthesia to numb the skin and sedatives to relax you.
- The machine used to perform SMP is called the Dermatograph. It is attached to tiny needles that cycle at a rate of 100-140 cycles per second. The cycling speed is set by the surgeon.
- SMP needles penetrate and deposit ink at a depth of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mm into the skin. They are very fine medical-grade needles that deposit a small spot of specially-formulated pigment.

### Will you benefit from SMP?

- People who most benefit from SMP are those who are not candidates for hair transplantation, but still want the appearance of having more hair.
- SMP can be particularly good for covering up scars and creating fullness along a widening part, especially in people with dark hair that is contrasting against a light scalp.

- Patients who dislike the daily routines of using topical concealers or powders to give the appearance of more hair and want a more permanent solution.
- It is important to know that you can have a hair transplant on top of SMP or vice versa! In this case the SMP acts like filler and the hair adds texture.

### **Pre-Operative Instructions**

- Wash your hair and scalp the day before and the morning of your procedure.
- Do not use powders, concealers or hair products (gels, hair spray) the day of your procedure.
- Have a light breakfast; there is no need to fast.
- Arrange for transportation back home; you will have light sedation during your procedure and should not drive afterwards.

### **Post-Operative Instructions**

- Your scalp will exfoliate over the weeks following the SMP procedure. Sharp dots will not appear as defined as they did on the first day as the dead skin layers shed.
- After your procedure, lightly rinse the area with plain water in the shower. Do not use shampoos or conditioners and do not soak the scalp for three days following the session. Avoid saunas and steam rooms during this time as well.
- Do not use Rogaine (minoxidil) for 2 weeks or other products containing alcohol. Give your SMP ink 2 weeks to set and settle in the scalp.
- Do not exercise for three days.
- Your scalp may become dry and itchy following the procedure. If this happens, apply organic oils (coconut, Argan etc.) or Vaseline (petrolatum) to the area, but do not soak excessively. If it doesn't respond, the doctor may prescribe a prescription medication for the itching.
- Wear sunscreen and hats in sunlight for at least two weeks.
- Avoid chlorine submersion for life as it may discolor the dyes. This is not a good procedure for swimmers!

## **FAQs:**

### **Q: How long until the final result from SMP can be seen?**

A: Most patients require 2-4 sessions. Generally, we advise waiting about 2 weeks between sessions to allow the top layers of skin to shed so that we can accurately fill-in residual areas.

### **Q: What is the difference compared to a regular tattoo?**

A: A regular tattoo is often performed in a tattoo parlor by someone who is not a medical professional. The pigment is deposited deeper into the skin in a region called the dermis at a depth of 3.5 mm. The needles used are thick and carry lots of pigment.

In contrast, SMP is performed with special equipment that is different from the devices used in tattoo parlors. The needles used in SMP are smaller and the tattoo depth is shallower than with regular tattoos. The technique is also different in that it is largely composed of dots or tiny lines rather than solid figures or long, curved lines. The ink is also diluted to match your hair color and is designed not to discolor or turn blue as do normal tattoos. Rather, in time the tattoo will fade and lighten rather than discolor to an unnatural green-blue hue.

### **Q: How long will SMP last?**

A: SMP generally lasts 3-6 years. It will gradually lighten but should not discolor. Most patients will require touchups after this period.

### **Q: Will this damage my hair or cause side effects?**

A: SMP generally does not penetrate deep enough to cause trauma to the hair follicles. There is a potential for allergy to the dye, but this has only been seen in rare cases. The most common risk is pain and redness after treatment.