



The latest brow know-how

Q My eyebrows are sparse and I'm considering a new technique called microblading. What is it exactly and are there risks?

A Microblading is a form of cosmetic tattooing with a hand tool (rather than a digital device), which creates fine hair-like lines along the brows. The 'blade' is actually a series of very fine needles, which are dipped in the chosen pigment and then deposited in the dermis, the living tissue underneath the dead top layer of epidermis. Anaesthetic ointment is applied to numb the area first.

Microblading comes under the category of 'permanent make-up', which has been used for decades, mainly with digital tattooing devices, to offset brow loss after cancer treatment or other medical issues. Because the pigment is inserted at a relatively shallow level in the skin, it fades within 12 to 18 months and will need to be redone.

Apart from not liking the cosmetic result, the biggest risk with such procedures is contracting a blood-borne virus (BBV), such as hepatitis B or C. Your artist must be insured, and have been inspected by their local authority. Look round the premises yourself and make sure stringent hygiene is practised and that the

microblade is disposable/single use only.

Facialist Vaishaly Patel (vaishaly.com) asks clients to come for a consultation and to fill in a health questionnaire before booking their first treatment. The list of medical contraindications includes skin disorders (such as acne, eczema, psoriasis, scarring), any condition that affects immunity or healing ability, pregnancy or breastfeeding. If you are in any doubt or taking drugs, including the contraceptive pill, ask your doctor first. One reader was told by a

non-medically qualified artist to come off the pill because it was affecting the pigment: this is unacceptable.

At the first session, you and the technician need to agree on the shape of your brows, which will be drawn in with a cosmetic pencil, and the colour. 'My brows looked scarily dark afterwards and even darker the second day. But they settled down in a week or so. The most difficult thing was keeping them dry for seven days,' says journalist Alice Hart-Davis, who recently had the treatment.

The pigment will lighten during the healing process so you will need a second session some weeks later to retouch, fill in areas that need more and perhaps add to the shape. The effect and longevity will vary with different skin types. Prices start at £400 at Vaishaly and £495 at KB Pro

PERMANENT MAKE-UP ARTIST KAREN BETTS ADVISES

■ Research your artist. Ask where they trained (they should have a certificate) and to see a portfolio of their work.

■ Choose an artist who has completed a five-day course, which includes BBV and infection control as well as colour theory and practical work.

■ Brow hairs do not need to be shaved off for microblading, so stay clear of anyone who suggests this.

Karen is MD of KB Pro, kbpro.com



WEBSITE OF THE WEEK

lymediseaseaction.org.uk

This warm wet summer has triggered another wave of Lyme disease, the tick-borne infection that can result in chronic ill health, which may prove potentially fatal. Former England rugby captain Matt Dawson had to have multiple heart operations after contracting the bacterial infection from a visit to a London park last year. The charity Lyme Disease Action gives a huge amount of reliable information on this website, both for lay people and the medical profession, who may not be familiar with it. You might need a cup of tea and a good half hour to navigate the site but it really is worth spending the time.



TASTE-TESTING FREE-FROM BISCUITS

with friends, including one who has gluten sensitivity but was feeling deprived of teatime treats, we can vouch that scrumptious Lazy Day Chocolate Gingers and the same brand's Chocolate Orange Slice satisfy everyone. They're also dairy- and egg-free, and vegan. £2.39 each, lazydayfoods.com.

Email your questions to sarah@sarahstacey.com

GETTY IMAGES; ZHANNA TRETIAKOVA/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL PROBLEM.