

SKINPEN FROM BELLUS MEDICAL

WITH SAMANTHA CONRAD, MD, FAAD



In each edition, Modern Aesthetics® asks top cosmetic physicians about the latest devices they are using in their practice. Here, **Samantha Conrad, MD, FAAD**, Clinical Practice Director at Northwestern/NMG Dermatology in Chicago, tells us why she chose **Bellus Medical's SkinPen microneedling device** over all of the other microneedling devices out there.

WHAT IS SKINPEN AND WHEN DID YOU BEGIN USING IT?

Samantha Conrad, MD, FAAD: The SkinPen is a microneedling device from Bellus Medical. It works by creating a multitude of microchannels in the skin via sterile needles. As these microchannels heal, they help remodel the skin to improve the appearance of superficial irregularities, namely facial acne scars. I began using it about six months ago.

HOW DOES IT COMPARE WITH OTHER MICRONEEDLING DEVICES ON THE MARKET?

Dr. Conrad: It's the "Wild West" of microneedling out there. There are devices that have no regulation or calibration and are made in other countries where quality control might not be up to par. As a result, some devices do not have sterile cartridges, which could increase risk for infection and cross contamination. I wanted a device that has been fully investigated and approved by the FDA, and SkinPen is the only device that passed this test. I looked through all of the FDA documentation on efficacy and safety—which was very reassuring. I work at a big university hospital. When I bring in a new device or product I need to have it vetted so I can go to the department chairs and say, "I want to bring this on." I need to show documentation that it is effective and safe. SkinPen had everything queued at the FDA so I could look through everything.



HOW ARE YOU USING IT IN YOUR PRACTICE?

Dr. Conrad: SkinPen is extremely effective for acne scars. I recommend three to six treatments, about one month apart, depending on how deep we penetrate each time and how much scarring the patient has. Patients are treated at four-week intervals, because when we create subclinical injury, we need to give the skin time to heal—without hitting it again right away.

ARE YOUR PATIENTS HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS?

Dr. Conrad: They are extremely happy. With SkinPen these patients are not signing up for prolonged downtime; they are back in makeup the next day. Procedural pain is minor, more uncomfortable than painful even at the deeper settings when used after topical numbing. The potential for infection is really minimal when patient selection and screening are done, and it's at an accessible price point.

IS THERE A LEARNING CURVE FOR PROVIDERS?

Dr. Conrad: It's a pretty straightforward procedure with SkinPen. You are looking for an endpoint of erythema and some pinpoint bleeding. Every patient is different in terms of what depth you will reach, so it's all about looking for that endpoint.

WHO DO YOU TREAT WITH SKINPEN?

Dr. Conrad: Microneedling, when done correctly, is not a very inflammatory procedure, and you can use the SkinPen safely in a wide range of skin types and colors. This gives you a large and diverse patient base to work with. We always ask patients if they have a history of cold sores before they get treated. In these cases, we will pre-medicate with an anti-viral medication to avoid triggering an outbreak. I don't like to treat active acne, but we can often navigate around the acne to treat the scarring or ideally wait until the acne is under better control to start the SkinPen sessions. ■