

Derm dangers: Avoid these 5 unhealthy skin care trends

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Social media platforms are spouting a steady stream of unsafe skin care trends, according to the American Academy of Dermatology.

This is National Healthy Skin Month, and board-certified dermatologists are putting a spotlight on five unsafe practices you might come across while perusing social media.

Performing cosmetic treatments at home

People are microneedling, injecting fillers and using lasers to remove unwanted hair in videos taken at home.

"This is something I find really concerning," said [Dr. Sara Moghaddam](#), a board-certified dermatologist in Selbyville, Del. "For example, at-home microneedling, also known as derma-rolling, is dangerous due to risk of infections and improper techniques."

[Dr. Oyetewa Oyerinde](#), an assistant professor of dermatology and director of the Skin of Color Clinic at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, warns that an unsafe cosmetic procedure can look perfectly harmless on someone's social media platform.

"My [patients](#) will see people who document their entire experience performing a cosmetic procedure on TikTok or on Instagram," Oyerinde said. "I tell patients, even if their [immediate effect](#) looks good to you—and they may be using filters and other things to make it look good—you have no idea if they ended up in the emergency room afterward because of a bad reaction."

Trying nasal tanning spray

Self-tanner applied to the skin is a safe way to gain a lovely glow, but nasal tanning spray is a new trend that is not safe at all, said [Dr. Lindsey Zubritsky](#), a board-certified dermatologist in Ocean Springs, Miss.

People using nasal tanning spray first inhale it, and then spend unprotected time in the sun, Zubritsky said. Like any sun exposure, it increases risk of skin cancer and premature skin aging.

To top it off, the [active ingredient](#) in nasal tanning spray isn't safe—either afamelanotide or bremelanotide (melanotan I or II), Zubritsky added.

"Melanotan isn't approved or regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and it's illegal to sell it in many countries, including the United States," Zubritsky said.

Using hot peppers for fuller lips

Social media mavens have been using hot peppers from the pantry to achieve fuller lips, Oyerinde said.

"I've seen people use peppers, like Scotch bonnet or habañero, to get their lips to look bigger temporarily," Oyerinde said. "That is potentially very dangerous, because it can cause [allergic contact dermatitis](#), a form of eczema, or other rashes that can leave dark spots around the mouth or on the lips that are hard to get rid of."

Dermatologist-injected dermal fillers are a much safer option, she said.

Taking supplements randomly

Many folks online are taking supplements without talking to their doctor first, which is another problematic practice, said [Dr. Rajani Katta](#), a clinical assistant professor at Baylor.

"Ingredients in supplements advertised for [skin](#), hair and nails have been

linked to birth defects, an increase in [cancer risk](#) and even side effects such as acne and hair loss," Katta said.

Skipping the sunscreen

People on social media are debating whether a person should use or not use sunscreen, something that dermatologists say should be a no-brainer.

"I've seen a huge rise in anti-sunscreen sentiment on [social media](#), which is quite concerning," said Zubritsky. "A significant number of people are posting about the harmful effects of sunscreen and claiming that most sunscreens lead to cancer or contain cancer-causing ingredients."

Anti-sunscreen claims aren't backed by science, Zubritsky said. Current scientific evidence doesn't show that any sunscreen ingredients currently available in the United States are harmful to human health.

More information: The American Academy of Dermatology has more about [sun protection](#).

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