A FREE GUIDE FROM AREA HYDRATION & AESTHETICS

Before Anyone Touches Your Face (or Your Veins)

What to ask any med spa before you book, from a former ER nurse and board-certified family nurse practitioner.

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SECTION 1

Who is actually treating you?

When a friend asks me how to tell if a med spa is legit, my first questions are always about the people. Who is performing your treatment? Are they licensed? Have they been formally trained in this specific procedure, and do they keep training as the field changes?

In California, med spas operate under physician oversight, so ask who the medical director is and how involved they are. A name on paperwork is not the same as real supervision.

Don't be shy about asking for credentials. My degrees and certifications hang in my office. They aren't on display in the lobby, but if you ask, you will see them. Any provider worth trusting will feel the same way.

What I saw in the ER: A patient came back from a cosmetic surgery abroad with an infection so severe that local surgeons were hesitant to take her on, because someone else had done the original work. I still think about her. How did she research that provider? How did she know they were trained, that the space was clean, that they followed sterile technique? Ask those questions before anyone touches you, not after.

> ASK
>
> Who is performing my treatment, and what is their license? Who is your medical director? Can I see before-and-after photos or hear from other clients?

Why it matters: Your care matters, and you are uniquely you. You deserve to be part of every decision, from what goes into your body to what the result should look like. No one cares about your health more than you do, so you should always know who is treating you.

SECTION 2

Is there a real consultation, or just a waiver?

At Area Hydration & Aesthetics, every first-time client has a consultation before any treatment, no exceptions. You can book your service online, and we may send your consents ahead of time so you can read them at home. But no medication is given and no procedure begins until we've sat down together.

In that consultation, we talk about your goals, any treatments you've had before, your timeline, and your budget. Then we decide on a plan together.

During that conversation, I'm listening closely. Have you ever had a reaction to a treatment? Any allergies? Have you seen another provider and left unhappy, and if so, why? I want your full medical history, your medications, and your skincare routine, because all of it changes what's safe for you.

What makes me pause: heart or kidney conditions, heart medications or diuretics, blood thinners, a history of cold sores, retinoid use before laser, recent sun exposure or tanning (or a beach trip coming up), active acne before microneedling, and a fear of needles. This isn't the full list. It's why the consult exists.

When I say "not yet": Every summer, people come in for laser right after time in the sun, and I postpone them. A fresh tan makes the skin react differently to laser energy, which can lead to burns, blistering, and uneven results. Waiting a few weeks protects you. Microneedling over active acne can spread bacteria, so we may treat the breakouts first with a chemical peel and microneedle once your skin is ready.

Clients come to me for my expertise. When I explain why we're waiting, they understand. A provider who never says "not yet" isn't protecting you.

> ASK
> Will I have a consultation before treatment? Who reviews my medical history? Have you ever told a client to wait?

SECTION 3

Where do your products come from?

Everything that goes into your body at Area Hydration & Aesthetics has a paper trail. Our IV ingredients come from 503A and 503B compounding pharmacies, the regulated facilities licensed to prepare these medications, some of them local. Our neurotoxins and fillers come directly from Galderma and Merz. They arrive sealed and sterile, and they stay that way until they reach you.

Products bought cheaply online are a gamble. You might get the real thing. You might get plain water sold as neurotoxin, peptides, or GLP-1s. Or you might get something that should never go into a human body. I don't take that gamble with my clients.

> ASK
> Where do you source your products? Can you show me documentation?

SECTION 4

What does the space tell you?

You can learn a lot in the first 30 seconds. Is it orderly? Do the staff look put together? Does it feel professional? Needles or tools left out and paperwork everywhere are signs to slow down and ask more questions.

Look for a business license on display. It's a good sign that, at the very least, the business itself is operating legitimately. It doesn't tell you who is licensed to treat you. That's what Section 1 is for.

SECTION 5

Treatment by treatment

IV THERAPY

Who should not get a drip, or needs extra caution:

- Heart conditions such as congestive heart failure
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Chronic kidney disease, especially anyone on dialysis
- Clotting disorders
- An infection or irritation where the IV would go in
- An allergy to any ingredient in the bag

Before the line goes in, expect to be asked about your health history, whether you've had IV therapy before, and whether anything went wrong last time. If no one asks, that tells you something.

During your drip at Area Hydration & Aesthetics, a provider is always on site, we check your vital signs before and after every drip, and we keep an emergency kit ready in case of a reaction. Reactions are rare, but being prepared is what separates a medical treatment from a wellness trend.

What preparation looks like: A client once began having heart palpitations partway through her IV. It wasn't a reaction to the drip, but we didn't wait to find out. We stopped the infusion, kept her IV line in place, checked her blood pressure and blood sugar, started our emergency protocol, and sent her to the ER. She turned out to be fine. But in that moment, being prepared was the whole point.

> ASK
> Who monitors me during the drip? Do you check my vitals? If something happens to me in that chair, what will you do?

LASER

Why skin tone matters: Lasers use light energy that targets color. That's how they reach hair, sun spots, and redness. If the settings are wrong for your skin, the laser can target the melanin in your skin instead, causing burns, blistering, or dark patches (hyperpigmentation). Not every laser is safe for every skin tone. If your skin is rich in melanin, that's the first thing to ask about.

How we approach it at Area Hydration & Aesthetics:

- Every laser consultation includes a Fitzpatrick skin-type evaluation, which helps decide which laser and settings are right for your skin.
- First-time laser clients always start at the lowest setting for their treatment.
- We do a patch test whenever it's appropriate.

Before your session

- **Do** prepare your skin in the weeks before treatment, with gentle exfoliation and, if recommended, a retinoid or a pigment-calming ingredient like azelaic acid.
- **Do** stop retinoids, azelaic acid, and exfoliating acids (glycolic, lactic, salicylic) 5–7 days before treatment.
- **Don't** tan for 2 weeks before treatment. That includes sun, tanning beds, and self-tanner.
- **For laser hair removal: do** shave the area 24–48 hours before. **Don't** wax, pluck, or use hair-removal creams for 2–4 weeks beforehand. Laser targets the hair follicle, so if the hair has been pulled out, there's nothing for the laser to treat.

After your session

- **Do** wear sunscreen every day. You've invested in your skin, so protect that investment. If you remember only one thing from this section, make it this.
- **Don't** get filler, neurotoxin, chemical peels, microneedling, microdermabrasion, or harsh exfoliants for 2 weeks.

> ASK
> Did you evaluate my skin type? What setting are you starting me on? Will you do a patch test?

Professional vs. at-home: At-home rollers reach about 0.5 mm into the skin. Medical-grade devices can safely reach about 2.5 mm, which is where real collagen remodeling happens. Medical-grade pens also use sterile, single-use surgical-steel cartridges, plus protective sleeves and cartridges designed to keep fluid from flowing back into the machine. That protects you from contamination between clients.

Who should wait or skip it:

- A history of abnormal scarring, such as keloids
- Taking blood thinners, or having a clotting disorder
- Taking isotretinoin (Accutane) now, or within the past 6 months
- A weakened immune system
- Skin cancer, or suspicious lesions in the treatment area
- A history of cold sores (talk to your provider first)
- Neurotoxin within the past 2 weeks, or filler within the past 4 weeks
- An allergy to the numbing medication
- Pregnancy. We postpone elective treatments until after delivery.

Before your session

- **Do** arrive with clean skin.
- **Do** stop retinoids and exfoliating acids 3–5 days before.
- **Don't** come in sunburned, or with irritated or broken skin.
- **Don't** wax or use hair-removal creams on the area for a week beforehand.

After your session

- **Do** use only a gentle cleanser and the products your provider recommends for the first few days.
- **Do** wear sunscreen every day once your skin has calmed.
- **Don't** wear makeup for 24 hours.
- **Don't** do heavy workouts, saunas, or swimming for 48 hours.
- **Don't** pick at or peel flaking skin.
- **Don't** restart retinoids or acids for 3–5 days.

Results: You'll usually notice a difference in 7–14 days, but that's just the beginning. Your skin keeps building new collagen over the following weeks and months, so your best results come later, not on day 14.

With PRP: We draw a small amount of your blood, just like a routine blood test, and spin it in a centrifuge to concentrate the growth factors. Those are applied to your skin during the same visit.

Your PRP is always fresh. It's never stored and never shared. And no, you won't leave looking like you've been in a horror movie.

> ASK
> Is your device medical grade? Is the cartridge new and sealed? Who draws my blood for PRP?

INJECTABLES

If something goes wrong: A prepared provider keeps hyaluronidase on hand. It dissolves hyaluronic acid filler, which is the most common type. Not every filler can be dissolved, though. Calcium-based fillers like Radiesse have no approved reversal agent. Before you get filler anywhere, ask which product they're using and whether it can be reversed. At Area Hydration & Aesthetics, we also keep an emergency protocol ready, along with warm compresses, ice packs, and arnica for bruising.

Keeping it natural: It starts with listening to you. My philosophy is that less is best. We can always add more, but chasing an overfilled result is much harder. So I treat conservatively, have you come back in 2–4 weeks, and refine anything small from there.

I also tell every client: small imperfections are okay. Every face has asymmetries. True beauty is the person, not a perfect result.

When you'll see results:

- **Neurotoxin:** some products start working in 3–5 days, others closer to a week. Full results show at about 2 weeks for all of them.
- **Filler:** you'll see a difference right away, but some of it is swelling. Allow 2 weeks for everything to settle before judging your result.

Before your session

- **Do** plan around events. Book at least 2 weeks ahead so your result is settled.
- **Do** avoid alcohol and over-the-counter blood thinners like ibuprofen and fish oil for a few days beforehand to reduce bruising. Never stop a prescribed blood thinner without talking to your prescriber.
- **Don't** schedule dental work within 2 weeks before or after filler.

After your session

- **Neurotoxin: do** stay upright for 4 hours. **Don't** rub the area or do heavy workouts for 24 hours.
- **Filler: don't** do heavy workouts, saunas, or intense heat for 24–48 hours. **Don't** get facials or facial massage for 2 weeks.

Call your provider right away if you notice: severe or worsening pain, skin turning pale, white, or dusky, or any change in your vision. These are rare, but they're emergencies.

ASK

What product are you using? Can it be dissolved? Do you keep hyaluronidase in the clinic?

SECTION 6

Is pricing honest, or is it pressure?

At Area Hydration & Aesthetics, we talk about price only after we've built your plan together. You'll get options based on your goals and a written estimate. That price is locked for 30 days, so you can go home and think it over.

We don't quote exact prices over the phone. We can give you a general range, but your treatment is built for you, and a generic number for filler, neurotoxin, or laser wouldn't be honest. Financing is available. Pressure is not. You'll never be pushed to buy a package the same day.

I treat every consultation as education. Even if you don't book that day, you should leave knowing what's right for your skin and your body, and that our office is there when questions come up later.

Watch out for: "today only" pricing, pressure to buy a package on the spot, or a firm price quoted before anyone has looked at you.

ASK

Will I get a written estimate? How long is the price good for? Can I take time to decide?

SECTION 7

What happens after you leave?

Follow-up depends on your treatment:

- **Filler and neurotoxin:** a check-in at 2 weeks, once your result has settled, to refine anything if needed.
- **Microneedling:** a check-in at 2 weeks, to see how your skin is healing and how collagen is building.
- **Laser:** it depends on the treatment. Laser facials can be done as often as weekly, and we assess your skin at each visit. Treatments like IPL are spaced 4–6 weeks apart, and we evaluate your progress at each session.
- **IV therapy:** drips can be given as often as weekly, though most clients come in monthly. We recheck your health and vitals at every visit.

The most common mistakes that undo results:

- **Stopping before the series is finished.** Many treatments, including microneedling, chemical peels, and some lasers, work in a series because results build with each session. If I recommend a certain number of sessions and you don't complete them, you're getting only part of the result you came for.
- Skipping your skincare routine
- Skipping sunscreen
- Sleeping in makeup
- Using products that aren't suited to your skin's needs
- Not drinking enough water

Your treatment does the heavy lifting in the clinic. What you do at home, and staying with your plan, decides how far your results go. At Area Hydration & Aesthetics, we'll match your home routine to your treatment, whether that's our AREA Rituals line or a Universkin serum custom-made for your skin.

Red flags: when to walk out

- No business license displayed
- The space looks unkempt or careless
- No one asks you to sign a consent form
- No one asks about your health or medical history
- The provider seems unsure of their answers

If even one of these feels off, it's okay to leave. Your safety comes before any appointment.

If you remember one thing

You are uniquely you, and your care should be too. There's no cookie-cutter approach to aesthetics and wellness, and no one should push you toward a treatment that isn't right for you. You deserve to ask every question, get every answer, and feel comfortable, welcome, and at ease wherever you choose to be treated.

A note from me

I wrote this guide because I've seen what happens when people don't know the right questions to ask, first in the ER and now in aesthetics. You deserve to walk into any appointment informed, confident, and in control of your care.

Beauty and wellness is not a luxury — it's a necessity.

At Area Hydration & Aesthetics, every plan starts with a conversation, because your care should be as unique as you are.

Ready to start? Book your consultation, and let's talk about your goals.

Not sure where to begin? Take our quiz, Beauty in Every Area of You, and we'll point you in the right direction.

With care,
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This guide is for education only and is not medical advice. Your provider should evaluate your individual health before any treatment.