

Superficial Chemical Peel: What You Need To Know Prior To Treatment

What is a Chemical Peel, and how does it work?

Changes on the skin caused by sun exposure include various combinations of irregular skin color (pigmentary changes and sun spots), changes in skin texture, fine or deep wrinkles, and skin looseness. These changes are due to damage in the skin's support system, and to the pigment producing cells. A chemical peel is a specific technique for skin renewal using different types of acids (glycolic, salicylic, trichloroacetic, lactic).

How do Chemical Peels benefit me?

Chemical peeling is a technique used to enhance the appearance of the skin. During this treatment, a chemical solution is applied to the skin, which causes dead skin cells to separate and peel off. A chemical peel produces younger-looking skin by stripping away old, sun damaged skin, which the body replaces with new, healthy skin. The new regenerated skin is usually smoother, more even in color, and less wrinkled than the old skin.

How soon should I see benefit?

Most patients experience some degree of textural smoothing and lightening of brown spots after the first treatment. The expected beneficial results should be expected approximately 3-4 weeks after treatment, but can improve up to several months after treatment. Other skin improvements that may result from a peel series include: softening of fine lines from sun damage, increased smoothness of skin texture, mild smoothing of acne scars, lightening of pigmentation irregularities and increasing skin glow or radiance. Based on discussion with your provider, you will have a peel treatment program organized to best meet your expectations and needs.

Are there any special conditions or products I should make my provider aware of prior to procedure?

Yes! There are several conditions that make it unsafe to have a peel, or may enhance your skin's reactivity. You may be required to discontinue use of certain procedures/products 1-2 weeks before a peel. Please inform your provider if you have a history of:

- Herpes simplex (cold sores). You should receive preventive medicine prior to the peel
- Hypertrophic or keloidal scarring
- Warts in proposed treatment area
- Healing wounds in proposed treatment area
- Sunburn or wind burn in the 2-week period prior to proposed treatment
- Artificial tanning/sun bathing in the 6-week period prior to proposed treatment
- Waxing in proposed treatment area in the 2-week period prior to proposed treatment
- Accutane or other oral retinoid therapy in the 6-month period prior to proposed treatment

Is there anyone who should not receive a chemical peel?

» You should not receive treatment if you are pregnant or breast feeding, or if you have had an adverse reaction to previous peels.

How safe are peels, and are there any risks?

The peel procedure and products are generally safe, however there are potential risks of the procedure. These include temporary redness, burning, stinging, tingling, skin sensitivity, swelling, discoloration, and scarring. Peeling, light scabbing, sun sensitivity, and skin

sensitivity/irritation often occur in the 1-10 days after the procedure. We will discuss all the risks with you prior to treatment.

Will the peel be uncomfortable?

Depending on the desired effect, different sensations will be experienced. You should expect a tingling or itching sensation at first, moving into a heat/burning sensation as the peel procedure progresses.

What should I expect immediately after the treatment, and how should I care for the treated area?

Initially your skin may be somewhat red or puffy, and it will feel like a mild-moderate sunburn. Your eyes may swell. It may take up to one week for the renewal and rebuilding process to allow your skin appearance to return to "normal". Peeling is an expected result with some but not all superficial peels. You should avoid sun exposure, artificial tanning devices, and direct heat sources in the 2 weeks after treatment. We will give you detailed instructions on care at the time of the peel.

What can I do in preparation for my chemical peel?

1. Begin a broad-spectrum sunscreen 3 months prior to scheduled peel. Sunscreen should have an SPF of at least 30, zinc and titanium dioxide preparations are preferred. Sunscreen recommendations are available upon request.
2. Stop all glycolic acid products and retinoids (Retin-A, Tazorac, Differin, tretinoin, etc) 2-4 days prior to the peel.
3. If your skin is prone to hyperpigmentation (unusual darkening of the skin), you may be instructed to use a bleaching agent on a daily basis 2-4 weeks prior to the peel.
4. Please arrive at the office free of makeup. Otherwise, you will be instructed to use a liquid soap to remove all of your makeup prior to your peel.

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