

CHEMICAL PEELS-WHAT THEY CAN AND CANNOT DO

Dermatologic surgeons have been using peeling agents for the last 50 years. Light peels to correct mild defects, medium-depth peels to correct moderate defects can be used over the entire face and neck. Combining light and medium-depth peels can correct different skin problems. Today with rejuvenation of the skin and reversal of the aging process paramount in the minds of many, chemical peeling has emerged as an exciting supplement to total skin care program.

Although lasers receive the most media attention, chemical peels can achieve identical results in many situations at much less cost. Microdermabrasion, another procedure that is often showcased in many woman's magazines, is less effective than chemical peels in most situations and is more expensive than chemical peels. We offer 12 different types of chemical peels that are chosen based on your skin's specific needs.

Most chemical peels today are supplemented by the peeling effects of creams such as retinoic acid (tretinoin, tazarotene, adapalene, and retinol) on a daily basis, which give a constant turnover of the top layers of the skin, further improving the integrity of the skin. A home program of moisturizers containing antioxidants and hydroxyacids also helps to improve the outcome of the in-office chemical peels. These issues will be discussed with you by your physician and a program will be tailored to your skin's needs. However, it is important to understand that chemical peels cannot correct all skin problems. Luckily, we have other procedures such as Botox, collagen, lasers and dermabrasion to fix the problems that are not corrected by chemical peels. Usually, many different treatments are combined with a home skin care regimen to achieve optimal results.

What Chemical Peels Can Do

1. Correct sun damage
2. Flatten mild scarring
3. Remove rhytides (wrinkles)
4. Improve irregular hyperpigmentation (dark spots)
5. Improve the smoothness of the complexion
6. Improve the sallow color of the skin that occurs after years of sun exposure
7. Improve acne or rosacea
8. Improve or correct melasma
9. Recent studies have proven that alpha hydroxy acids can help your skin hold onto water, therefore preventing dehydration and improving the appearance of fine wrinkles. (British Journal of Derm 1997:137:934-938)
10. Increase collagen production (This is known to decrease with aging)

The mild and moderate peels are called freshening peels because they improve the quality of the skin without altering its normal architecture. The ability of the skin to tan again and return to the same color after peeling or sunlight exposure is unchanged. Examples of this type of peel include glycolic acid, salicylic acid, TCA, Jessner's, and "Miami Peel".

What Chemical Peels Cannot Do

1. Chemical peels cannot change pore size. Pores may temporarily look smaller however this is not a permanent change.
2. Chemical peels cannot improve lax skin; removal of fine wrinkling may not make any difference if there is profound lax skin that needs a face-lift, dermabrasion or laser resurfacing.
3. Chemical peels cannot improve deep scarring. Dermabrasion, laser, punch grafting, punch elevation, or excision of scarring is much more effective.
4. Chemical peels cannot always totally remove hyperpigmentation, but can usually improve it.
5. Chemical peels cannot remove broken blood vessels on the face. Laser is used instead.

What to expect after a superficial peel-

The first chemical peel performed will be so light that you will probably not notice a change in your skin. The second and subsequent peels will likely result in minor scaling of the skin on the third day after the peel. Some patients appear slightly pink for an hour after the peel. Stronger peels will result in increased pinkness and scaling but this will still be unnoticed by most coworkers and friends. The stronger the peel is, the more effective it is, but more scaling and redness results. The strengths of the peels used will be determined by your lifestyle, your time frame of expected improvement, and your ability to tolerate the side effects. The peel protocols are tailored to your individual needs and will be discussed with you by your physician. Remember- you will benefit much more from your peels if you are 1) using sunscreen SPF 30 or higher every day and 2) using a prescription topical Vitamin A cream such as Retin A, Renova, Differin, or Tazarac. 3) returning every 4 weeks for the peels until the desired effects are achieved.

Contact us for more information at 305-324-7546 or DrB@derm.net or visit our web site @ www.derm.net