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FACIAL PEELS USING CHEMICALS OR LASER

The object of peeling is to permanently change the surface texture of the skin to more closely resemble that seen in youth. We call them surgical peels, because these are performed only by physicians

Background:

Changes that occur with aging of the face include:

- Folds caused by continuous muscular action, such as those between the nose and the mouth
- Sagging of the skin due to gravity and loss of volume in the face and jaws, and
- Changes in the texture of the skin itself, causing wrinkles.

It is this last category of aging that is best addressed by surgical peeling.

Most of the skin changes that occur with aging are related to damage caused by the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun. As a result of these radiation effects, the skin loses elasticity, thins, and develops uneven pigmentation. These changes typically begin in the skin around the eyes, and then progress to the area around the mouth before involving the entire facial skin. The changes in the skin can be graded on a scale developed by Dr. Glogau:

Glogau Grade	Approximate age	Characteristics
I (mild)	28-35	Minimal wrinkles
II (Moderate)	35-50	Early wrinkles, some uneven pigmentation. Wears makeup sometimes
III (Advanced)	50-65	Wrinkling at rest, sun spots and prominent blood vessels. Always wears makeup
IV (Severe)	Over 60	Deep wrinkles, some skin cancers, make-up cakes on

What does a surgical peel do?

Chemical and Laser peels in general create an injury to the skin. For Chemicals, the depth of that injury is determined by the chemical composition of the peel, and by the technique of application. For Lasers, the injury depth is determined by the type of laser, the power used, the duration of exposure, and the number of times the skin is exposed.

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As the skin begins to heal, it heals from the inside out, creating brand new surface layers and deeper, thicker deep layers. New collagen forms in organized bundles which resemble those of youthful skin, and which persist for many years. The deeper the peel, the more profound this effect becomes. Below, a woman with grade 2-3 sun damage has benefited from a medium depth peel that smoothed wrinkles, evened out the pigmentation, and created a more youthful skin tone:



In general, the greater the severity of sun damage, the deeper we need to go with our peel in attempting to reverse the process. Those with high Glogau numbers need deeper peels. The deeper we peel, the longer the healing process takes. Also, deeper peels are associated with greater risk of side effects, including changes in pigmentation, and risk of scarring. For this reason, we try to use the weakest peel that we believe will accomplish our goal in a given patient.

What kind of peel should I have?

We currently recommend combinations of peel solutions with varying concentrations that can treat the different parts of the face according to the thickness of the skin and the severity of the wrinkling. In general, peeling of the entire face is preferable to regional peeling, because this avoids the problem of uneven pigmentation.

What to expect:

We like to pre-treat with anti-viral medicines to prevent cold sore breakout, and Hydroquinone to prevent post operative darkening of the skin. We recommend against peeling very dark-skinned patients.

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For light peels, no anesthetic is necessary. For medium-depth peels, some anesthesia is needed. Some people can get by with a topically applied anesthetic cream. Others will require local anesthetic injections. Entire face treatment generally should be done under sedation in the operating room.

Peel solutions or laser energy will be carefully applied to thoroughly cleansed and degreased skin. After the application, your face will burn. This pain will persist for about six hours, and then resolve. You will receive medication for this. The procedure will take from 1-3 hours.

We will apply a soothing salve immediately following the peel. You will be washing your face frequently, and reapplying this salve after washing. Your face will swell, and your skin will discolor and weep over the next few days. The photograph below depicts the effect of a medium peel at Day 1, Day 6 and Day 9



Risks and Complications:

As stated above, all forms of skin resurfacing have risks. The deeper the peel, the greater the risk.

Some of these risks are:

- Loss of pigmentation (less of a risk in light skinned individuals)
- Increase in pigmentation (less of a risk in light skinned individuals)
- Scarring
- Uneven result
- Insufficient result

Summary:

Surgical peeling is a powerful non-surgical tool that can result in a significant improvement in facial appearance for those willing to make the time commitment to get it done.

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