

SPRINGFIELD ENT & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

3555 South Culpepper Circle
Springfield, Missouri 65804
(417) 887- 3855 / www.springfieldent.com

Instructions for Chemical Peel

Chemical peel is performed to improve the appearance of fine or medium wrinkles of the face as well as occasionally for improving pigmentation of the face. Deep wrinkles are usually best treated in other ways, such as with *laser resurfacing*, *collagen injection*, or *Botox*®.

Types of Chemical Peels

- **Light chemical peel** - Performed with agents such as glycolic acid, lower concentrations of trichloroacetic acid (TCA), or other agents. Performed for a light, "freshening," of the facial skin. This usually must be repeated every several months.
- **Medium chemical peel** - Typically performed with about 35% TCA with the goal of treating fine wrinkles of various areas of the face. Also used for pigmentation changes such as *melasma*, a brownish pigmentation of the face associated with pregnancy or birth - control pills.
- **Deep chemical peel** - A procedure that has largely been replaced by *laser resurfacing*. Deep peels are often done with phenol or Baker's solution. This carries a risk of excessive bleaching of the skin (causing, "alabaster," skin) and possibly scarring. We do not perform these peels.

Before the Procedure

- **Scheduling** - We will discuss your procedure beforehand in the office. A date for the procedure will either be scheduled then or we shall telephone you at a later time.
- **Photographs** - taken at before surgery and at various times afterward
- **Procedure** - will be performed in our office. Light and medium peels sting but can be performed without anesthesia or sedation. Laser resurfacing usually requires sedation or general anesthesia (being asleep).
- **Medication** (fill these prescriptions *before* your chemical peel)
 - **Anti-viral medication** - Such as Valtrex® will be started before the peel and continued for about 10 days afterward. Many people have been exposed to the herpes virus and this medication discourages a virus infection at the area of the peel.
 - **Steroid** - Prednisone may be prescribed to discourage swelling in certain cases, primarily in peels around the eyes.
 - **Pain medication** - will be prescribed for discomfort after the peel.

Day of Your Peel

- The chemical peel is performed in our office.
- You shall need someone to drive you home.
- If patients are especially anxious, medication may be prescribed to take orally before the procedure. If so, we will need to obtain your written consent for the peel *before* you have taken this medication - either at the previous office visit or before taking your medication on that day.
- You will wash your face well with soap and water in the office. Next, we will perform a facial wash with surgical soap and with an agent to remove excess skin oils to permit the peel to work.
- The peel requires about 5 - 10 minutes for each area of the face to be peeled - around the mouth, around each eye, forehead, and each cheek. You may need treatment in only some of these areas or may receive a peel for the full face.
- After the peel has had its effect, iced saline gauzes will be placed upon your face and then ointment applied to the area.
- Patients normally notice stinging after application of the peel agent. This subsides and normally returns a few hours later.

Skin Care Following your Peel

- **Medication** - Take as prescribed.
- **Washing** - Gently wash the face 3 times daily with a moisturizing soap such as Dove® beginning the night of your peel and continuing until all peeling is complete and the areas fully healed.
- **Moisturization** - Plain petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or Crisco® is applied to the peel areas after washing. Again, this is performed until healing is complete. Antibiotic ointment is not necessary.
- **Elevation** - Similar to most any other procedure, the chemical peel can cause local swelling. Elevating the head (as in a La-Z-Boy® type recliner chair) is helpful in reducing this.
- **Cool Compresses** - Cool, damp washcloths may be soothing right after your peel.
- **Sun Exposure** - Sun exposure can cause increased pigmentation (darkening) after your peel. Avoid sun exposure and use daily sunscreen (SPF 30+) for 6 months after your peel. Also, sun exposure is the #1 agent causing aging of skin; avoidance will help preserve a more youthful appearance!
- **Makeup** - Normally may be worn once the skin has fully healed - about 7 - 10 days.

Follow-up appointments

- First appointment is usually 4 - 7 days after surgery
- Then 1, 6, and 12 months after surgery.

Risks and complications

Although chemical peel is a very safe treatment, any procedure involves a certain amount of risk. Problems are not likely but could possibly include:

Medication reaction - adverse reaction to the cleaning or chemical peeling agents

Infection - due to either viral or bacterial agents. Patients are given a prescription for an antiviral medicine to start before the peel and to take during healing.

Pigmentation problems - pigment changes or areas of uneven pigmentation

Scarring - due to adverse reaction from the peel agent.

Injury - to structures near the peel area due to the chemicals used with the peel

What to expect after a chemical peel

- **Pain** - generally mild and well - controlled with pain medicine. It is normal to experience stinging and pain at the time of the peel and then again after a few hours. Cold compresses may be soothing.
- **Peeling of skin** - this begins after several days and is a necessary part of this treatment. Do not, "help," the skin to peel since this may cause scarring! Simply wash the face 3 times daily to allow the peeling skin to come off on its own.
- **Swelling** - this is common, especially around the eyes. Some patients shall be given a prescription for prednisone, a steroid to reduce swelling. Elevation of the head will help with this.
- **Redness** - always accompanies chemical peels and usually requires a few months to resolve.

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