

1- ABOUT PEELING TREATMENTS

Chemical peeling involves applying a chemical solution to the skin to remove its outer layers. How much skin they remove and how deep they penetrate will depend on the type of peel used, its strength and how long it is left on.

These have varying percentages of active ingredients and different pH levels. The percentage of a peel just indicates how much of the peeling agent is contained in the peel so a 15% glycolic acid peel has less glycolic acid than a 50% glycolic acid peel.

What really matters when it comes to peels is their pH level. This indicates how deep the peel will penetrate into the skin and how much irritation it will get.

The lower the pH, the deeper the peel (except in the enzymatic peeling).

Anything with a pH of less than 2.0 should be done by a doctor or nurse. Peels with a pH of 3 are what it is usually find in a beauty salon.

Types of chemical peels

There are three types of peels: superficial, medium and deep.

Superficial/Light Peels

Superficial or light peels are the gentlest type of peels available and one of the true 'lunchtime' or at home aesthetic procedures.

They only remove the top layer of the skin, known as the epidermis, and can give your skin and instantly brighter look as well as a smoother, more even texture.

They can be used to minimize fine lines and wrinkles, sun damage, mild acne scarring, age spots and dry or flaking skin.

They are usually made from AHAs and BHAs and include glycolic acid, lactic acid and salicylic acid.

Nowadays it is also common to use fruit enzymes and acids from natural sources, which offer the kind of results you would expect from a medium depth peel but with the side effects of a superficial peel.

A course of between six and 10 treatments is usually recommended to achieve the best results.

Superficial peels do not hurt, people only feel a slight tingling or stinging sensation, and have virtually no recovery time.

With a superficial peel people would be able to return to work or go out straight afterwards.

Medium Depth Peels

Medium depth peels give more dramatic results than superficial peels.

Usually derived from TCA, they penetrate deeper in to the skin and can be used to treat sun damage, pigmentation and wrinkles.

The downside of medium peels is that it will have a longer recovery and more side effects. People may also feel more discomfort during the treatment, including burning and stinging, which can last for 30 minutes to an hour after treatment.

The face can become swollen, pink and itchy following treatment and it will get more 'peeling' of the skin than with a superficial peel. It can also get patches of brown and white skin on the face during the healing process and in rare cases it can get scarring. Generally recovery takes around a week.

Deep Peels

Deep peels are the strongest type of chemical peel available.

It can achieve amazing results for sun damage, scarring and deep lines and wrinkles but be prepared to look quite scary after the treatment. They usually use carbolic acid or high strength TCA to penetrate the deeper layers, of the skin.

This type of peel is painful and can take months to fully recover from.

Because of the risks associated with Phenol peels it is important to find an experienced dermatologist or plastic surgeon to carry out the treatment.

For superficial or medium peels people can go to a beauty salon or medical aesthetics clinic.

For medium depth or medical grade peels patient should go to a qualified cosmetic doctor, dermatologist or nurse and for deep peels only a dermatologist, doctor or surgeon.

Peeling Agents

They are three groups of chemical products:

Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) products. Made from naturally occurring acids found in fruits and other foods,

The lactic acid from sour milk is one of the acids used in modern AHA peels. Other popular AHA peels used citric acid (from citrus fruit) and glycolic acid (from sugar cane).

a) Glycolic acid is the most common peeling agent. It comes in different strengths (20% – 70%) and different pH levels which will determine how deep it penetrates and how much peeling you get. It can be used to treat fine lines and wrinkles, sun damage, improvement of skin texture, skin brightening.

b) Lactic acid is less irritating than other AHAs and has a natural moisturizing effect on the skin. It is ideal for skin brightening. It can be used to treat pigmentation, dry or dehydrated skin, sensitive skin, rosacea.

c) Malic acid is a weaker AHA than glycolic acid. It can be used to treat acne, photo damage, rosacea, superficial pigmentation, eczema.

d) Citric acid works in the same way as tartaric and malic acids. It can be used to treat acne, photo damage, rosacea, superficial pigmentation, eczema.

e) Tartaric acid is a less irritating alternative to glycolic acid for a milder exfoliation of the skin. It can also help increase hydration. It can be used to treat acne, photo damage, rosacea, superficial pigmentation, eczema.

f) TCA or tri-chloro-acetic acid is a stronger acid than glycolic. It penetrates deeper into the skin and is usually used for medium depth or deep peels although it can be used at a lower concentration. It can be used to treat skin tightening, fine lines and wrinkles, acne scars, large pores, hyper-pigmentation.

Beta hydroxy acid (BHA) or salicylic acid peels are not as popular as AHA peels, yet they can be equally effective and have specific advantages for some skin types. it retains its aspirin-like anti-inflammatory properties. A deep BHA peel can be superior for many skin types because the irritation and inflammation are kept to a minimum due to the analgesic action of the BHA compound.

The most common concentrations used today are 20% to 30% .

They are also the preferred option for those with sensitive skin, including skin affected by rosacea.

a) Salicylic acid is unique amongst the hydroxy acids in that it can penetrate deeper into the oil glands causing exfoliation even in the oily areas of the face and scalp, making it ideal for treating acne and oily skin.

Enzymes are found naturally in many fruits. Examples include the enzyme papain and bromelain. Unlike acids, enzymes are activated by water. They break down the proteins found in the skin, which helps to make it softer. Enzymes can also help to break down some of the bonds on the outermost layers of skin, which can loosen some dead skin cells.

a) Fruit enzymes from fruits such as papaya or pineapple can also be used as peeling agents. They are anti-bacterial, promote cell renewal and can digest oil from spots and dead skin. They can be used to treat acne, rosacea, dehydrated skin, hyper-reactive and sensitive skin.

Users

Almost everyone can benefit from a chemical peel.

Peels can improve the look of the skin dramatically and can leave user looking younger and healthier.

People who will benefit:

- I. Dry skin
- II. Oily skin
- III. Acne
- IV. Acne scarring
- V. Lines and wrinkles
- VI. Pigmentation
- VII. Sun damage
- VIII. Dull or lifeless skin

People that must wait:

a) People with a history of poor skin healing and keloid scarring it may not be suitable for a peel, specially stronger.

b) Having any type of infection on the face it may be best advised to wait until it clears up before having a peel.

c) People with acne who have been using iso-tretinoin within the last 12 months are not suitable.

d) People with dark skin types such as Asian or Afro-Caribbean skin may not be suitable for medium or deep peels.

The side effects

There are virtually no risks associated with light or superficial peels. As they only mildly exfoliate the skin it should no get any negative side effects. On rare occasions some people develop hyper-pigmentation.

There are some risks associated with medium depth peels. People will usually get patches of brown and white skin on their face after treatment specially if they do not wear a sunscreen every time they go outside, but this should only be temporary.

There is a rare chance of scarring after a medium peel, so make sure avoid picking or scratching.

There are a number of risks associated with deep peels, the most common of which is hypo-pigmentation.

As with all peels there are also at risk of hyper-pigmentation so make sure people applies sunscreen with a high SPF.

Deep peels are very traumatic on the skin and can be quite dangerous so it is necessary to go to a highly experienced surgeon or doctor to have the treatment.

Peeling effects

It depends on the type of peeling patient are having.

Typically with a superficial peel the skin will be cleansed and the peeling solution will be applied. In some cases this is removed after a few minutes and in others people may leave with it on and remove it at home later.

During the peel it should feel nothing more than a slight tingling or stinging sensation.

With many superficial peels they won't feel anything. The treatment is really quick and easy and can take as little as 10 to 20 minutes.

With Medium depth peels the skin is also thoroughly cleansed before the peeling solution is applied.

The peel will then be neutralized and removed. As this is a medium depth peel expect the treatment to be more uncomfortable than a light peel.

Deep peels are often performed in conjunction with a face-lift or other surgical procedures when they are under general anaesthetic.

Before chemical peeling

Before having a chemical peel, they should avoid exfoliating the face, sun bathing or using tanning beds and changing the normal skincare regime, unless instructed to do so by the practitioner.

It is important to remember that with certain types of peel it will have to prepare the skin beforehand. This will involve using homecare products for about two weeks before treatment.

After

With a superficial peel it may get a little bit of pinkness and some mild skin peeling for a couple of days but will be able to resume normal activities straight away.

With medium depth peels there is a longer recovery period, usually a week to 10 days, although the skin can be pink for a few months. It will also get more peeling with a medium depth peel and may want to stay inside for a few days.

The face might be quite sore and swollen and feel tight after treatment.

People must avoid scratching or picking off any peeling skin as it may cause the skin to bleed and be left with scars.

Recovery from a deep peel can take a couple of weeks.

People are likely to experience pain and discomfort after the treatment, as the face will be tender and swollen and feel almost sun burnt. It should take recommended painkillers to manage this.

With all chemical peels they should avoid sunbathing afterwards and make sure they wear a sunscreen when people go out, even if it is not sunny, as they may develop brown marks on the skin.

Beauty isn't about having a pretty face.

It's about having a pretty mind, pretty heart and pretty soul.

(Anonymous)

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