

CHEMICAL PEEL

PATIENT INFORMATION

I. INTRODUCTION

While perpetually youthful appearing skin has always been one of man and woman's most ancient desires, until the past several decades the goal was unattainable. The ancient Egyptians and other great civilizations sought means of smoothing wrinkled skin through applications of substances such as honey and mild and even practiced a rather crude method of mechanical sanding using alabaster stone (undoubtedly the forerunner of today's dermabrasion or mechanical sanding). Obviously none of these techniques ever achieved any level of success.

In Europe, in this century, there developed techniques of facial rejuvenation that were practiced by non-physicians known as aestheticians. These lay people prepared combinations of lotions and chemicals that could indeed remove the outer, worn layer of skin. Physicians in the United States developed an interest in performing this procedure, and with time it became a practical, safe, and comfortable procedure. Through the rapid progress made in medical science and particularly anesthesia, it was practical to shorten the performance and recovery time of such a facial rejuvenation from weeks to days.

II. PRE-OPERATIVELY

A full history will be taken pre-operatively. It is important to notify your physician if there is any history of cold sores, herpes, or zoster virus. Depending on the area to be peeled you may be placed on prophylactic antibiotics as well as facial creams in order to prepare the operative site. The procedure itself is typically performed in the office under local anesthesia usually with IV sedation given by an anesthesiologist. Intravenous fluids and pain medication are given. There is an initial period of pain as the chemical peel begins. This pain will subside within thirty minutes, but it will then reoccur approximately six hours later. Pain medicine will be prescribed for you to use in the post-operative period.

III. POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. At the conclusion of your chemical peel a dressing may have been applied to the areas which were treated. If present, leave this dressing in place until the morning following surgery. At this point, it may be carefully removed. If no dressing was applied, leave the ointment that was placed over your wound intact until the morning following surgery.
2. On the morning following surgery you can begin showering 4-6 times a day and allow the water to thoroughly rinse the operated area. Pat the area dry and apply a thick coat of Polysporin Ointment.
3. Repeat the washing procedure approximately six times per day for the first seven days.
4. Keep the peeled area covered with a thick coat of Polysporin Ointment **at all times** to avoid crusting.

5. **Never pick a crust that does not loosen easily.** Apply the Polysporin Ointment to them and they should come off easily with time.
6. After your first post-operative visit to our office, we can advise you about the care in your particular case.
7. **Remember**, each case is different and some people tend to heal faster than others.

IV. GENERALLY

- A. The intense pink color will fade within 5-7 days and a light pink will replace it.
- B. Persons who are prone to cold sores (fever blisters) may have a flare up following their procedure. If this should happen notify us immediately so that we may recommend treatment.
- C. Occasionally small “white heads” may appear in treated areas; these usually disappear within 2-3 weeks-occasionally longer.
- D. This skin may feel somewhat tense and dry during the healing period, but Crisco vegetable shortening or Polysporin Ointment may be used as a moisturizer. Do not use anything else without first checking with our office.
- E. In most cases makeup may be used to cover the treated areas within 7-14 days. This can be discussed at your first post-operative visit.
- F. In most cases you may be able to return to school or work as soon as the weeping has subsided.
- G. The skin may retain swelling for several weeks following a Chemical Peel so be patient since continued improvement in the texture of the skin may occur for up to six to twelve months in some cases.
- H. Try to avoid direct rays of the sun for at least 6-8 weeks since your “new” skin will be more sensitive and will have a tendency to burn and tan more easily. The peeled areas should be protected with a sunscreen (SPF #15 or greater) for six months and you should wear a large brimmed hat to shade the face during this interval. Prolonged sun exposure at any time during the first six months can lead to permanent pigmentary changes of the peeled skin.
- I. Prolonged exposure to the sun (sunbathing, golfing, fishing, tennis, or similar activities) during the sunny part of the day should be avoided for the initial 6-8 week period after you peel.
- J. Approximately ten days after your peel you may experience some dryness of the skin and perhaps some itching. We shall provide or recommend medications to recommend this temporary discomfort which is due to the inactivity of the skins own oil glands. We will also recommend specific lotions and moisturizers and shall anticipate your skin’s needs during the first few months after the procedure. Generally, the pink color has faded by 6-8 weeks.

V. COMPLICATIONS

Any type of surgery carries a small risk of complications and a chemical peel is no exception. It is good medical practice to be informed of the possible complications prior to any procedure. Problems with chemical peels are rare, but they can occur.

1. **Swelling.**-Swelling will occur over the entire face particularly around the eyelids. This gradually resolves over a period of a week to ten days. Some minimal swelling may persist for a few weeks longer.
2. **Infection.**-Occasionally an infection can occur particularly if the directions for cleansing the skin are not followed. A reactivation of herpes zoster infection is possible as well and you may be given medicines to help prevent this.
3. **Pigmentation.**-A darkening of the skin or blotchiness may occur anytime up to three months following treatment. This is usually due to excess sun or heat exposure. Special medication may be prescribed for this and will usually clear the condition completely. Occasionally, further treatment may be required consisting of a second procedure. Persons with a dark complexion undergoing treatment are advised that a blotchy complexion may arise which will usually even out over a period of 3-6 months. Some areas of slightly lighter or darker pigmentation may remain. The skin will be a pink color for a period of 6-8 weeks or possibly longer. This color is due to the increased blood supply in the new skin and will gradually disappear until the final complexion is achieved between 3-6 months. The final complexion is usually somewhat lighter than the original complexion.
4. **Scar Tissue.**-On occasion small areas of the face particularly the neck and chin may show some thickening for a variable period of time following treatment. These areas are build-ups of underlying collagen and scar tissue and are usually easily controlled by periodic injections or medication.

V. FINALLY

If any questions arise or anything should develop that you are uncertain about, do not hesitate to telephone us. Please make every attempt to keep your initial post-operative appointment and all subsequent appointments since it is vitally important that we monitor your healing.

I have read and understand the above information. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding this surgery.

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____