

Chemical Peel Information

What is a chemical peel?

A chemical peel is the application of a mild solution to the skin that is highly effective in the correction or improvement of skin clarity, tone and texture. The most commonly treated areas are the face, chest, hands and back to treat sun damage, wrinkling, acne (current and residual marks) and skin discolorations such as hyperpigmentation and melasma. The process is simple and is completed within 30 minutes. Multiple treatments are recommended for best results. We offer a variety of peels from mild to deep. Your provider will select the most appropriate peel to bring your skin to its optimum health.

What are possible adverse effects or complications?

Due to the nature of the chemical peel, some side effects may occur. The treatment may cause temporary stinging, burning, discoloration, swelling, and/or peeling. The skin may look worse before it looks better. In severe cases, allergic reaction, infection, or scarring may rarely occur. Each patient will respond uniquely to a chemical peel treatment due to variables such as skin type, age, stress, conditions of the skin, sun damage, smoking history, climate, etc.

It is important to notify your doctor if you have a history of cold sores, as an antiviral medication will need to be prescribed prior to your peel.

What to do prior to the procedure:

Patients may have to temporarily discontinue certain parts of their skin care regimen or add a bleaching agent to their regimen prior to each peel. Consult with your doctor to see if this is recommended for you. Please avoid waxing or using depilatory creams for 2 weeks prior to your peel, and avoid the sun (or tanning) the day prior to your peel.

What to expect the day of the procedure:

Chemical peeling is a three-step process of cleansing, chemical peel, and repair. The skin will be cleaned and dried before treatment. The practitioner and patient will determine the strength (time of exposure) of treatment. The chemical peel will be removed and a soothing cream will be applied to the skin.

What to expect when you go home:

The most common side effects of redness and irritation should subside within 24 hours of treatment. With stronger strengths, patients may experience blisters, erosions, peeling, and possible crusting. Patients should wash with a gentle cleanser (we recommend NeoStrata Facial Cleanser with Gluconolactone or Vivite Replenish Hydrating Cleanser). Use a healing moisturizer (we recommend Vivite Replenish Hydrating Cream or NeoStrata Bionic Face Cream) for a minimum of 3 days after your peel. You may resume your normal skin care regimen, including retinols and glycolic acid, as soon as your skin feels normal (usually 3-7 days after a peel). It is important to refrain from tanning/direct exposure to the sun for 4 weeks after treatment. Avoid picking or helping the peeling skin off with your fingers or a loofah/washcloth. The skin will come off when it's ready.

When to come back for a follow-up and how many treatments will I need?

Most patients benefit from a monthly peel until their condition has significantly improved or resolved. This commonly takes a minimum of 3 peels. Your practitioner will occasionally make adjustments to the peel ingredients or strength based on your response to the prior peel. Several treatments may be needed to see optimal results.

