

# *CHEMICAL PEELS AND SKIN RESURFACING*

The appearance of the skin itself is not changed by surgery. Surgery can address jowling, droopy brows and eyelids and the “turkey gobbler” under the chin, but surgery alone will NOT alter dark skin patches or eliminate fine wrinkles around the eyes. Such changes can only be made by treating the skin itself; stretching will not cause elimination of fine lines.

Many options exist for rejuvenation of the skin. Over the counter skin agents with fruit acids may help minimally. Prescription medication with Retinoids (such as Retin-A) offer more improvement for fine wrinkles. Prescription bleaching agents may temporarily help with skin pigment changes or brown spots. More invasive modalities include chemical peels and laser treatments. Most skin peels are based on acid, which allows the outer layer of skin to essentially be burned off. Removing the outer layer of skin is called ablative therapy. Non-ablative techniques do NOT take off the outer layer of the skin but stimulate the collagen underneath to become stronger. This includes Thermage. These techniques have variable results.

The ablative modalities remove the outer layer of skin (epidermis) and allow the underlying layer to reform a new epidermis- one that is more youthful, and therefore less wrinkled and discolored. Resurfacing can also remove pre-cancerous lesions (not true with non-ablative therapies). After the outer layer is removed, there is the appearance of a blister that has popped. The skin is raw and pink but does not bleed. The skin regrows over a period of 3-10 days, depending on the depth of the peel. Superficial, medium and deep peels may be performed, depending on the wishes of the patient and the downtime the patient will allow. More superficial peels have minimal downtime (3-5 days) but the results are not as dramatic as with a medium-depth or deep peel (downtime 7-14 days). The risks also increase with the depth of the peel.

BEFORE the peel:

1. Start a prescription-strength tretinoin (Winslow Bleaching Cream or Nightly Cream) TWO weeks before the peel, use nightly including the night BEFORE the peel then discontinue until told to resume (typically 3 weeks after the peel). Follow instructions given for tretinoin application.
2. Stop smoking 2 weeks prior to the peel and for 2 weeks after the peel. Smoking increases the risks of hyperpigmentation, delayed healing and other complications.
3. Start Valtrex (prescription medication) the night before the peel.
4. Purchase Aquaphor (a large tub!) and your prescription medications before the day of the peel. Aquaphor will stain clothes and bed linens, so plan accordingly.
5. Arrive at the office with a button-up shirt and NO makeup or necklaces!
6. **You MUST have a driver to and from the office.**

DURING the peel:

1. Take Valium or Halcion 45 minutes prior to start time for the procedures.
2. The skin will first be prepared with Acetone to remove oils
3. A slight stinging is common during the peel; a fan will help with discomfort. Your skin will have greasy ointment on it when you leave the office.

You MUST have a driver to and from your appointment.

AFTER the peel:

1. **The face heals faster if it is moist!!** Aquaphor ONLY should be applied to the skin such that it is ALWAYS covered with a greasy layer. (Any rashes should be reported to the office immediately).
2. **Showering is MANDATORY:** the peeled area should NOT be scrubbed. Water can run over the area and the wound can be patted dry, a minimum of twice a day.
3. **Begin Vinegar rinses on the skin.** Mix ½ Distilled Vinegar and ½ Distilled water and gently pat skin with a saturated soft cloth – two times per day.
4. **Apply more Aquaphor after the vinegar rinse.**
5. Swelling is normal; bleeding is not
6. After the peel the skin will look slightly darker, and dark spots may take up more color. The skin will start to slough in 3-4 days, do NOT pull it or rub it!
7. MEN no shaving x 1 week, then you may use an electric razor only. We will tell you when you can use a regular razor.
8. **Sleep on your back with your head slightly elevated.** Do not allow bedding to rub against your skin.
9. Pain is unusual; Tylenol or Motrin may be taken for discomfort (unless directed otherwise)
10. Crusting and scabbing should NOT occur if the skin stays moist enough. If these do occur, do NOT pick at the crusts; simply apply more ointment
11. Sunlight should be avoided during the healing period. You cannot use sunblock for the first week. Following complete healing, a sunblock (SPF 35 or higher) should be always applied to prevent discolorations from the sun; the skin will be very sensitive to sunlight for about 6 months
12. Itching may occur; anti-histamines (Benadryl, Claritin, Allegra, etc) may help with the itch. Cool cloths also help, or a cold shower may take away the itch. Scratches on the face in the morning indicate the need for an anti-histamine and possibly mittens on the hands at night!
13. A lower dose of Benadryl may be used for daytime hours such as Children's Chewable Benadryl.
14. Infection is uncommon but is manifested as green discharge, increased redness, pain and fever- notify your doctor immediately if you see this
15. Hives or welts indicate a sensitivity to the Aquaphor please call us if this occurs
16. Cold sore activation is possible; if you suspect a cold sore contact the office.
17. **DO NOT BEGIN THE POST PEEL PACK UNTIL AFTER YOUR 1 WEEK APPOINTMENT**
18. Makeup can typically be resumed at one week; your skin will be sensitive to chemicals.
19. At your three week visit you will see the Aestheticians to determine the best course to maintain your new healthier skin and you will restart the nightly tretinoin.
20. Your normal skin care products may be restarted after the skin has healed.
21. How and when to take your medications:
  - a. Valtrex one pill the night before surgery and then twice a day for 5 days
  - b. Valium 45 minutes before procedure if applicable
  - c. Keflex begin the day after your procedure
  - d. Medrol Dose pack - Begin the day after surgery

Shopping list:

Aquaphor

Benadryl

Sleeping Gloves

Distilled White Vinegar                  Distilled Water

Non-adhesive dressing (to put over your greased nose so that you can wear your glasses)

For further questions about peels or postoperative care, call the office at 317-814-1104