

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 change pore size, 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’s Nightly Renewal 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. (We are no longer calling tretinoin into the pharmacy. It is available for purchase from the office. Tretinoin is NOT required prior to the peel but it does make healing faster and is one of the most important things an aging face can use to maintain skin. Therefore, we highly recommend it).
2. Start Valtrex (prescription medication) the night before the peel.
3. 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.

DAY OF the peel:

1. Bring your Valium (Diazepam) with you to the office on the day of your procedure – unless otherwise instructed.
2. Arrive at the office wearing a button-up shirt and NO makeup or necklaces!

DURING the peel:

1. The skin will first be prepared with Acetone to remove oils.
2. 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.
3. **You MUST have a driver to and from the office.**

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 thick greasy layer. (Any rashes should be reported to the office immediately).
2. **Showering is MANDATORY:** the peeled area should NOT be scrubbed. Water (lukewarm) can run over the area and the wound can be patted dry, a minimum of twice a day. Use Baby shampoo only to wash your hair.
3. **Begin Vinegar rinses on the skin. Mix ½ Distilled Vinegar and ½ Distilled water** (add more water if it stings) and gently pat skin with a saturated soft cloth – two times per day
4. **Apply more Aquaphor after the Vinegar rinses.**
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 x1 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. 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 always be 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. If you have green discharge, increased redness, pain or fever- notify your doctor immediately.
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 Aesthetician to determine the best course to maintain your new healthier skin. You will resume the nightly tretinoin at this time unless otherwise instructed.
20. Your normal skin care products may be restarted after the skin has healed.
21. How and when to take your medications:
 - a. Valtrex - Take one pill the night before surgery and then twice a day for 5 days.
 - b. Bring Valium with you to the office on the day of your procedure.
 - c. Keflex - Begin the day after your procedure.
 - d. Medrol Dose pack - Begin the day of procedure, unless you are having an IV, then day after.

Shopping List:

Aquaphor
Baby Shampoo
Benadryl
Sleeping Gloves
Distilled White Vinegar
Distilled Water

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