Chemical Peels – Are they for you? By Julie Boschee

To Peel or not to Peel is one of the questions that are asked of Estheticians by clients practically on a daily basis. As an Esthetician, certified in Chemical peels, and one who has given and received chemicals peels of all sorts. The answers you are looking for may be right here.

Peels are part of a multi- billion dollar industry that we call nonsurgical aesthetic skin care. Chemical peels are exactly what they seem to be. Chemical peeling is an accelerated exfoliation process induced by a chemical agent. Many different agents can to be used to peel the outermost layer or layers of skin, allowing new and healthier skin to show itself.

To determine if a peel is for you, set up a consultation with an esthetician to have your skin analyzed. The skin condition, the skin type, the aging factor and a client’s general health are all principles that need to be taken into consideration.

The benefits of Chemical Peels will vary but the basic improvements are as follows; dead skin is exfoliated, the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles are reduced. Peels also reduce hyperpigmentation and tighten tone and smooth the skins texture. Peels can also promote skin cell activity, which means cell growth.

 Peels can be a singular treatment or used in combination with other treatments in a multifaceted treatment plan. The treatment plans which include custom facials and/or microdermabrasion along with the Chemical peels are usually the most effective.

There are also a number of contraindications that will prevent individuals from receiving peels. Most of these affect the wound healing process, as a peel in effect is a wound to the skin. The uppermost top layer of skin will be removed during the peel process as the new skin is revealed and then starts to heal. Here are just a few contraindications that would prevent you from safely receiving a Chemical peel. They are Diabetes, Lupus, a history of Keloids, hypertrophic scarring, cancer patients receiving Chemotherapy or radiation and patients who are taking oral or inhaled steroids .

A large number of peels have been developed over time, from the superficial peel (lunchtime peel) to the deep peel. While peels provide a freshening of the skin they do not come without risk. Some of the deeper peels could cause injury or the greatest amount of success in the fight against wrinkles, lines, hyperpigmentation and even acne. Results can vary as home care in conjunction with esthetic treatments are the true keys to long term results.

When having a chemical peel consultation, be sure and ask your licensed esthetician (who is Chemical peel certified) what products would be recommended for home use before, during and after the peeling process. Invest in those products, they are worth it and will only enhance your results. Downtime should always be a consideration while searching for the proper peel along with the care your post peel face will require.

In reality the light to medium depth peels should not cause scarring. Just a wonderful exfoliation that will brighten your skin, lighten hyperpigmentation and reduce those fine lines and wrinkles. However be aware that when used in combination with Dermaplaning the risk of scaring sharply increases.

All peels are not created equal. Here is a quick overview of the types of peels that are currently available.

Glycolic Acid Peels, Lactic Acid Peels and Alpha Hydroxy Acid Peels are a popular form of Skin rejuvenation. In the nineties, these peels were considered the “lunch time” peels and of little value. We now know that the Glycolic Acid Peels have the ability to improve the epidermis and dermis, especially in higher percentages of glycolic Acid. This peel must be neutralized to stop the peeling action. It can be a tricky acid, which is why having a trained Esthetician is an important part of this process, as if it is left on the skin too long it may cause deeper and uneven peeling and possibly even scarring. With continued use of these peels the skin will become stronger and more resilient with each treatment.

TCA Peels can be applied in layers to increase strength. The main ingredient in a TCA peel is Trichloracetic Acid. TCA peels have many benefits, and the ability to provide several different results depending on the strength of the peel and the amount of layers of the peel that are applied. TCA is easy to use and provide a predictable medium depth peel.

 Salicylic Acid peels or “beta” peels usually come in several strengths and work best in the treatment of acne. Some of the benefits of a “Beta” peel are that it dissolves excess sebum, provides antibacterial properties, improves acne and assists in the speed of healing acne, helps lighten hyperpigmentation and also improves the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Jessner Peels are a medium depth peel that allows for a rapid, deep skin exfoliation. It will also be applied in layers. With this peel, expect to peel for a week or two. This is an aggressive treatment with many benefits and days of at home care. This peel exfoliates dead skin, dissolves keratin and sebum, reduces the appearance of lines and wrinkles. It also tightens and tones the skin and can even assist in softening superficial scarring.

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