

Chemical Peel - Superficial

Chemical peels are one of the most popular non-invasive cosmetic procedures performed to rejuvenate the appearance of the skin. Over time, factors such as sun damage, heredity, diet, and repetitive muscle movement contribute to the formation of lines and wrinkles in the face. Additionally, the development of pigmentation irregularities or acne scars can cause skin to lose its smooth, youthful appearance. Often performed on the face, neck, and hands, various types of chemical peels can reduce the appearance of facial wrinkles, scars, and uneven pigmentation, as well as treat pre-cancerous skin lesions.





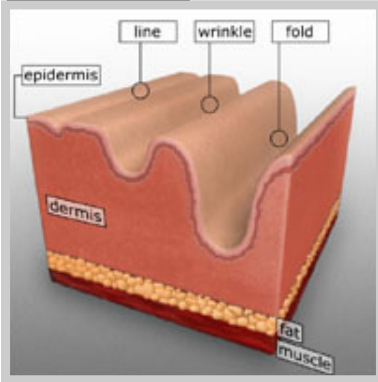
Superficial Peel Introduction

Chemical peels are one of the most popular non-invasive cosmetic procedures performed to rejuvenate the appearance of the skin. Over time, factors such as sun damage, heredity, diet, and repetitive muscle movement contribute to the formation of lines and wrinkles in the face. Additionally, the development of pigmentation irregularities or acne scars can cause skin to lose its smooth, youthful appearance. Often performed on the face, neck, and hands, various types of chemical peels can reduce the appearance of facial wrinkles, scars, and uneven pigmentation, as well as treat pre-cancerous skin lesions.



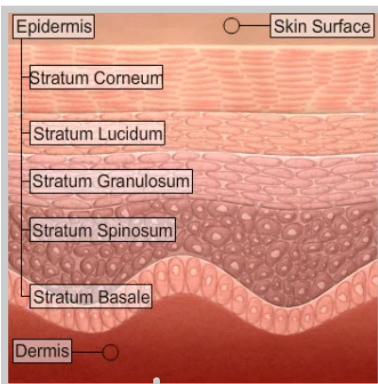
Superficial Peels

Superficial peels are the mildest form of chemical peel treatment. Superficial peels are usually performed using alphahydroxy acids, and in some instances betahydroxy acids. Alphahydroxy acids are naturally occurring acids which include glycolic acid, lactic acid, and fruit acids, while betahydroxy acids include salicylic acid. You may be familiar with glycolic acid and salicylic acid, as they are often key ingredients in facial creams and astringents. Although the concentration of acid may vary depending on the extent of treatment, the acids used to perform superficial peels are not as harsh as other chemical peels. In fact, low concentrations of alphahydroxy acids are often mixed with facial creams or washes that can be used as part of a daily facial care routine to maintain a youthful appearance. With little downtime, superficial peels are a safe, effective method of treating fine lines, pigmentation abnormalities, acne scars, and persistent dry skin.



Skin Damage and Wrinkle Formation

The skin is composed of two layers known as the epidermis and dermis. The epidermis, or outer layer of the skin, acts as the skin's primary defense against the environment. As a result, these layers are damaged. The dermis, or innermost layer of the skin, is composed primarily of connective tissue. Within the connective tissue of the dermis, collagen and elastin fibers form a network that provides the skin with structure, support, and elasticity. Over time, this network of fibers breaks down as well, which in addition to other factors, further contributes to the formation of wrinkles and other changes in appearance.



How Do Superficial Peels Work?

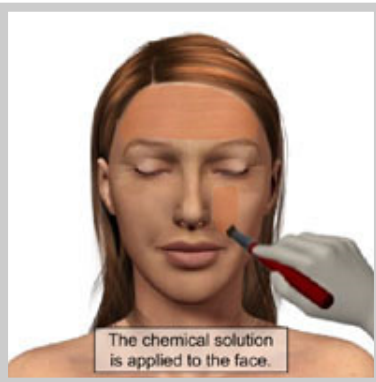
During a superficial peel, a chemical solution is applied to the face. The solution causes mild trauma, or injury, to the epidermis, which is composed of five distinct layers. Similar to exfoliating your skin, the injury causes the damaged outer layers of the epidermis to peel away. As part of the healing process, increased cell growth produces new, healthier skin layers beneath, which give the face a more youthful, rejuvenated appearance.

It is important to realize that superficial peels are not intended to treat deep wrinkles or significantly sagging skin. In these circumstances, a face lift or dermal filler injections may produce more desirable results.



Procedure Preparation

Often referred to as the "lunchtime peel," superficial peels generally last between fifteen and thirty minutes. A few weeks before your procedure, your physician may recommend that you use a facial product that contains trans retinoic acid. This is because trans retinoic acid is believed to prepare the outer layer of skin for treatment as well as allow the chemical peel solution to soak evenly through your skin. You may also be required to wash your face with a special soap twenty-four hours before your procedure. Prior to the start of your procedure, the treatment areas will be cleansed. While you may feel a slight stinging or warming sensation during the procedure, you will most likely not feel any significant pain. Therefore, an anesthetic is usually not necessary for a superficial peel.



Superficial Peel Procedure

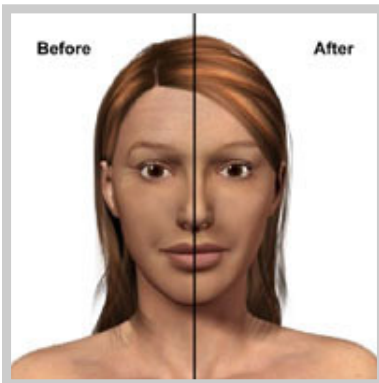
Using a sponge or a brush, the physician will apply the chemical solution to individual areas over the entire face. The solution will penetrate into your skin for approximately fifteen minutes and then it will be removed or neutralized with a different substance.

Superficial peels generally treat the epidermis, which is why the effects of treatment are less than other types of chemical peels. The chemical solution used during a superficial peel damages the outermost layers of the epidermis, which causes them to peel away. The healing process triggers cell growth which generates new skin layers. In addition, the healing process also stimulates collagen and elastin production in the dermis. As the damaged skin peels away, the new skin is revealed, giving the face a smoother, revitalized, more youthful appearance.



Superficial Peel Recovery

Immediately following your procedure, you may experience some redness and irritation that is similar to sunburn. As healing takes place, you may also notice some crusting or flaking of your skin. These symptoms will most likely subside in approximately seven days. Although bandaging is not necessary, like any wound it is important to keep the area moist and protected. Therefore, your physician may recommend that you apply a protective ointment to your face in the days following your procedure. You will most likely notice the outer layers of the skin peeling away within several days following treatment. New skin will begin to appear in approximately one to two weeks. Your skin will be more sensitive to sun exposure as it heals. Therefore, it is extremely important that you protect your skin from the sun with UVA and UVB protection while you heal.



Superficial Peel Results

The results from a superficial peel are generally mild compared to more aggressive forms of treatment such as a medium or deep peel. However, this also means that the risks associated with the procedure are typically less. Your physician may recommend that you undergo repeated treatments at regular intervals. For example, some individuals receive treatments on a weekly or monthly basis until the desired result is achieved.

It is important to realize that the appearance of your skin will continue to change and age after you have had a superficial peel treatment. However, superficial peels are a fast, effective method of rejuvenating your skin.