

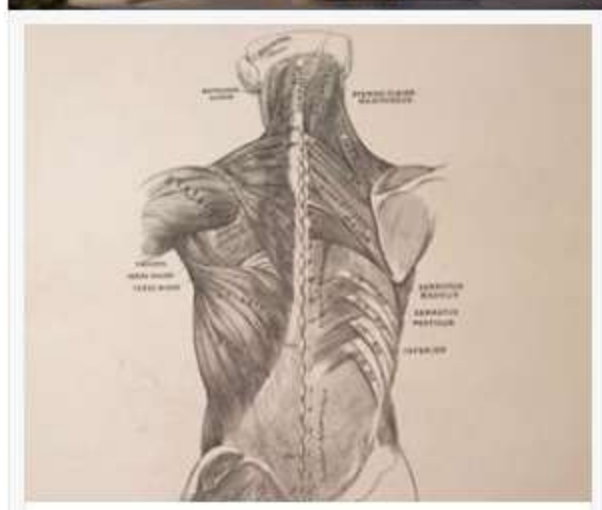
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What's the appeal of a chemical peel?



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OUR PICKS



By Senara Spa
Posted Sep 28, 2017 at 05:00 AM



From summer camp sunburns to those pimples you picked despite knowing better, the skin on your face takes a beating over the years.

When we're young, our skin is resilient and bounces back quickly, because the rate at which skin cells turn over is much higher. As we age, the slowing down of skin cells turning over can lead to some of the most common signs of aging, including fine lines and wrinkles, dullness and hyperpigmentation.

If you're looking for a way to improve your skin's texture and tone and to counteract some of the effects of age you see on your own face, a **chemical peel** might be the ticket.

Q. Peel? So like, an orange?

A. "Peel" is perhaps a bit of a misnomer. Let's go with "exfoliation." Chemical exfoliation.

Q. Exfoliation? Like a scrub I would get from the grocery store skin care aisle?

A. Same idea. Different technique. "Scrubs" rely on the physical action of rubbing to remove dead skin cells, and are also known for hanging out the passenger side of their best friend's ride. Chemical exfoliants use different types of acids to break down the bonds that hold dead skin cells together, which then makes the dead cells easier to remove.

Q. Acids? That sounds kinda scary.

A. Technically, yes, but probably not the types of acids you're thinking of. The most common types of acids used for chemical exfoliation are Alpha Hydroxy Acids like lactic acids and glycolic acids, and Beta Hydroxy Acids like salicylic acid. Lactic acid is often derived from milk, glycolic acid is usually derived from sugarcane and, while often synthetic, salicylic acid can be found in willow bark.

Q. Okay, so chemical exfoliants aren't like "acid" acid, but why are they better than scrubs?

A. Chemical exfoliants, when used correctly, are often much gentler than physical exfoliants, which usually rely on tiny particles that can cause small tears on the surface of the skin. Depending on their strength, chemical exfoliants can go deeper than physical exfoliants and remove more dead skin cells.

Q. Gentle? I saw this episode of "Sex and the City" once where Samantha had to wear a veil after getting a peel because her face was so red.

A. While everyone's skin is different, chemical exfoliation performed by a licensed esthetician should not cause excessive irritation. Some people report a mild tingling during the exfoliation process. Afterward, newly revealed skin can be sensitive, so it's important you moisturize properly and please, wear your sunscreen!

Q. Sunscreen. Got it. What should I expect during a session?

A. Every spa and esthetician is different, but in terms of exfoliant application, chemicals are applied to the face with a brush or facial cotton. Depending on the exact exfoliant, some are left on, while others are removed.



Q. Okay, chemical exfoliation doesn't sound so scary, I guess. How often can I exfoliate using chemicals, because I want, like, baby skin.

A. While there are a lot of over-the-counter products that contain chemical exfoliants, which can be used several times a week or even daily, the levels of acids found in the professional- and medical-grade solutions are much stronger and yield greater results. If you're getting an exfoliating "peel" at a spa, most people wait three or four weeks in between sessions.

Q. That seems reasonable. Back to that baby skin, though. How do I get that on my face?

A. Right, baby skin. Standard spa peels generally have a pH of around 3 percent and are good for removing surface impurities like blackheads and clogged pores. Medical-grade peels have a pH of around 1 percent, which is why a clinician must oversee the process. The lower the pH, the deeper a peel will penetrate the skin, which is why medical peels are able to correct fine lines and wrinkles and hyperpigmentation. The amount of time it will take for a person to see the results they're looking for can vary, but a series of four to six sessions is a good ballpark estimate.

Q. I heard once that good things come to those who wait, so I guess that's not too bad. How much does all of this cost?

A. Prices vary depending on the exact type of professional chemical exfoliation you're looking for and your esthetician will help you determine the best option for your exact skin concerns and budget. Many peels cost the same as getting a regular facial.

Q. It seems like there are a lot of options for the type of chemicals that are used to exfoliate. How do I decide the best one?

A. There are a lot of options, but you're not in this alone. Your esthetician will help you decide the best type of chemical exfoliation for your skin type and specific goals. Sometimes, a combination of manual and chemical exfoliating techniques are used to further enhance peel results. For example, dermaplaning uses a fine blade to manually remove dead skins to ready skin for chemical exfoliation.

Q. Perfect. Are the results permanent?

A. Results vary based on a number of factors, including peel strength and after-peel care. The better you take care of your skin after your peel, the longer your results will be noticeable. Many people find that an annual series of six treatments in the fall helps renew skin after summer UV exposure and keep their skin looking healthy.

Not sure how to put your best face forward? Senara Spa offers a full range of in-spa skin care services and quality at-home skin care products to suit all skin types and conditions.

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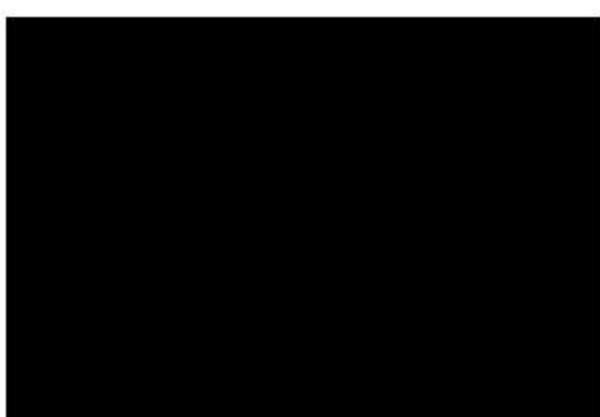
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