



Patient Information

Skin Rejuvenation: A Guide

People of all ages undergo nonsurgical cosmetic procedures to diminish wrinkles, remove blemishes and even out skin tone — rejuvenating the face and revealing fresher, younger skin.

Three procedures that work to accomplish this goal are chemical peels, microdermabrasion and laser skin resurfacing. According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, these are among the top 10 nonsurgical cosmetic procedures.

Chemical Peels

A chemical peel can restore wrinkled, blemished, unevenly pigmented or sun-damaged skin. The NP applies a chemical solution to the face to improve and smooth the skin's texture by removing damaged outer layers.

Chemical peels range from light to deep, depending on the type of chemical used. For this reason, a chemical peel may take anywhere from a half hour to a few hours. You may need just one procedure or multiple procedures.

Temporary skin flaking, throbbing, tingling or swelling may occur after the procedure. Your skin may also be red, and you'll be sensitive to the sun. Deeper chemical peels permanently lighten your skin, so you will lose your ability to tan. After any chemical peel, avoid direct sun exposure (as well as excessive heat) unless you protect yourself with sunscreen.

After the treatment, cleanse and moisturize your skin using products suggested by your nurse practitioner. In addition, experts recommend the following:

- Don't pick or pull any loose skin, crusts or scabs that may form.
- Avoid tanning booths for at least 3 weeks.
- Don't apply makeup the day of the treatment.
- Don't apply ice or iced water to the area.
- Don't heat the area excessively (avoid hot shower sprays, Jacuzzis, steam rooms, saunas and hair dryers).
- Don't go swimming.
- Avoid sweating.
- Don't exfoliate the treated area.

Microdermabrasion

Microdermabrasion diminishes fine lines, crow's feet, age spots and acne scars. Using a device similar to a fine sandblaster, the NP sprays tiny crystals across the face. Gentle abrasion is combined with suction to remove the outer skin layer.

Each microdermabrasion treatment takes about 30 minutes to an hour, and there is no downtime. More than one treatment may be necessary to reach the maximum effect. Some redness may occur after treatment, but it should not persist more than a few hours. Your skin may feel tight, but this will subside with cleansing and moisturizing as directed by your NP.

Avoid direct sun exposure after the procedure, and be sure to use sunscreen if you will be in the sun. In addition, follow the tips listed for treating skin after a chemical peel.

Laser Skin Resurfacing

Laser skin resurfacing is a process in which a beam of laser energy vaporizes the upper layers of damaged skin so that tighter, younger-looking skin appears. The procedure is commonly used to treat fine lines, most notably around the mouth and eyes. Laser skin resurfacing can also treat facial scars and uneven skin tone.

The process can take from a few minutes to an hour and may require more than one session. Some redness and slight swelling might occur for a few days after the procedure, and the treated area may feel similar to a mild sunburn or windburn.

You may apply a cool cloth or wrapped ice pack to the treated area for comfort. Cleanse and moisturize the skin as directed by your NP. Don't rub, shave or scratch the skin for a week, since it will be very delicate. Avoid direct sun exposure for a week. Don't scrub your face, and don't pick at the skin. Avoid using hot blow dryers around the face, which can irritate skin.

Total downtime for laser procedures can be up to 2 weeks. Remember that laser skin resurfacing is a cellular process — not a surgical one — and it is necessary to be patient while awaiting results. ❖

Sources include the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (www.plasticsurgery.org) and Lisa Williams De Silva, NP, owner of Ultra Smooth Skin in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Additional Notes:
