

Chemical Peel / TCA

General procedure information

Most commonly performed to enhance your appearance and your self-confidence, the chemical peel can also remove pre-cancerous skin growths, soften acne facial scars and even control acne.

The chemical solution aims to improve and smooth the texture of the facial skin by removing its damaged layers. It is recommended to people with facial blemishes, wrinkles and uneven skin pigmentation.

We recommend the trichloroacetic acid peel (TCA). It is a less invasive, medium depth peel, targeting surface wrinkles and blemishes.

The TCA:

- Smoothes out fine surface wrinkles
- Removes superficial blemishes
- Corrects pigment problems
- Can be used also on neck or other body areas
- May require pre-treatment with Retin-A or AHA creams
- Takes only 10-15 minutes
- Is preferred for darker-skinned patients
- Peel depth can be adjusted
- May be repeated to maintain results
- Requires the use of a sunblock cream for several months after treatment
- Healing is usually quick

Preparing for treatment

Your surgeon will instruct you on how to prepare for your peel treatment. He may recommend you take Retin A - a prescription medication derived from Vitamin A that will pre-treat your skin. This will allow the TCA solution to penetrate more deeply and evenly. If your skin won't tolerate Retin-A pre-treatment, an AHA cream may be used instead.

The procedure

The chemical peel procedure involves applying a chemical solution that actually burns away the uppermost layer of the skin. After thoroughly cleansing the skin, your surgeon will carefully apply the solution, usually only to problem areas. In case you need a full face peel, the solution is applied everywhere but the eyes, brows and lips. You will feel a slight burning sensation as the solution is applied but it goes away quickly as the chemical itself acts like an anaesthetic.



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A full-face TCA peel usually takes no more than 15 minutes. Two or more TCA peels spaced out over several months may be needed to obtain the desired result. Your surgeon may recommend mild TCA peels be repeated once month.

Recovery

After a TCA peel, your surgeon may prescribe a mild pain medication to relieve any tingling or throbbing you may feel. It is important to follow your doctor's specific instructions in order for your face to heal properly. You may experience significant swelling, depending on the strength of the peel used. The new skin will surface within 5 to 10 days.

Your healed skin will be able to produce pigment as always, as the peel will not bleach the skin. However, your surgeon will advise you to avoid sun exposure for several months after treatment to protect the newly formed layers of skin.

The moderate discomfort and mild swelling you may experience will fade away within the first week. You may return to work and resume some of your normal activities in about two weeks. After the healing process is done, your skin will be noticeably smoother and fresher-looking.

Risks and complications

All chemical peels carry some uncertainty and risk, but this is a normally safe procedure when it is performed by a qualified, experienced cosmetic surgeon. The risk of infection and scarring is minimal.