

**Chesterfield Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery**  
**Chemical Peel Instructions**

**What Is It?**

- Chemical peels use various topical liquids to remove the outer layers of the skin. This is like power washing your deck. It unclogs pores, tightens the skin some, and brings out the underlying fresh, baby skin.
- Chemical peels typically have an easier recovery than most laser peels. Chemical peels usually have more “dry” healing with flaking that recovers in 7 days whereas lasers produce a wet surface and may take a little longer to heal.

**Pre-treatment:**

- Retin-A cream: Start using this at least 1 month ahead of time. This will get the skin ready for cellular turnover and primed for healing. Most patients will start with Tretinoin Cream 0.025%. Apply light coat to entire face every 3<sup>rd</sup> night for 1-2 weeks, then increase frequency to every other night for 1-2 weeks, and finally apply daily. Redness and flaking will happen (this means the medication is working!). This is the intended effect of helping to speed up your skin's turnover, shedding the old, dead skin cells and bringing newer cells to the surface. Stop using a few days prior to peeling and resume use 2-3 weeks *after* the peel.
- 4% Hydroxyquinone: Helps turn off the pigment cells in our skin to prevent abnormal skin darkening *after* the peel. Very important to use prior to peeling, with timing dependant on skin color. Caucasian/light skin types need to use 3-4 weeks prior to peeling. Asian/light brown skin start using 6-8 weeks ahead of time. Dark skin needs 8-12 weeks of use prior to peeling. Place small amount on fingertip and dab in several spots around the face prior to rubbing in for even application over the entire face. Stop using a few days prior to peeling and resume use 2-3 weeks *after* the peel. Very important and essential to use sunscreen regularly and reapply frequently when using hydroxyquinone as this medication inhibits our body's natural sun protection.
- Let Dr. Geiger know if you have any history of cold sores or fever blisters. He will pre-treat with Acyclovir or Valtrex for 7 days (starting 2 days before the peel, continue for 5 days afterwards) as the body's reaction to the peel may induce one of these sores to begin.

**Day of Peel:**

- If you have someone to drive you to and from appointment, Dr. Geiger can prescribe a pain pill and/or light sedative (valium) that you can take 1 hour ahead of time. This helps for deeper peels, but not necessary for lighter peels.
- Wash your face prior to coming to your appointment. Do NOT apply any makeup, creams, ointments, medications, etc. These will block the peel from penetrating the skin.
- Dr. Geiger will perform the peel. You will feel some warmth during the procedure. We will give you a fan to hold which will help reduce that sensation. We will apply ointment over the areas peeled.

**After Peel Care:**

- Apply a light coat of ointment on your peeled skin several times per day. Recommend using either Vaniply, Vaseline, or Aquaphor. All of these are over the counter and available at your local pharmacy.
- Wash face twice daily with gentle cleanser (Obagi or Cetaphil), pat dry, then reapply ointment as above
- Do NOT peel your skin. This will be tempting but do not peel away the flaking skin. This will cause little knicks deeper in the skin levels where the skin is still adherent, causing wounding, which leads to scarring. Let the skin naturally fall off with twice daily facial washes.
- When peeling is finished in ~7 days, stop with the ointment and resume your regular hypoallergenic moisturizer (Obagi) and sunscreen.
- Resume Retin-A/Tretinoin cream and hydroquinone 2-3 weeks after the peel. You should remain on these at least 3 months after your peel, but they can be used life long as part of a good skin care regimen.

**Activity:** Take it easy for the day. You can resume normal activity the day after the peel.

**Follow up:** Dr. Geiger in 7-10 days. Call office for specific appointment date and time if you do not already have one.

*Office contact number: 314-205-6420*

**Other Instructions:**

**Should you experience any of these symptoms call the office:**

- Fever of 102 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Blistering occurring around areas of peeling or mouth
- Excessive pain or burning sensations
- Any other questions or concerns.