

FACIAL PEELS

Chemical peels have been used since the time of the ancient Egyptians. They used raw apples, spoiled milk and other fruit acids to rejuvenate the skin. A chemical peel is a treatment that chemically exfoliates the top layers of the skin to reveal a smoother texture and healthier skin.

Chemical peels are used to treat a number of skin conditions. These include, fine lines, hyper-pigmentation, environmental damage and acne conditions. If performed properly, healing time is minimal.

There are many different types of peels ranging from very superficial peels to deep peels. The main goal of a chemical peel is exfoliation of dead skin cells so that there is rapid turnover of the cells. This results in new collagen formation. Many practices and spas give their peels names such as, “relaxation peel,” “signature facial,” and “oxygen facial.” The problem is that they never tell you what is in these peels. Many times, there are no pharmaceutical grade products that actually act on the skin. They are nothing more than glorified face creams and facial massages.

Basically, **moderate to deep peels** are the only ones that truly treat the skin. Absorption into the skin is pH dependant. Therefore, the peeling agent, an acid, will sting and sometimes burn when applied. For this reason, Dr. Mueller performs these peels with IV sedation in most cases. Once the peeling agent is neutralized, the patient is awakened and the stinging / burning is not realized.

Healing is pain-free at home from that point. Mild to moderate peels can be performed without IV sedation, but most mild peels need to be performed in multiple sessions (every 3 – 4 weeks for about 6 – 9 months). Moderate and deep peels only require one to three treatments to obtain a more desirable result.

Dr. Mueller uses TCA, Obagi Blue Peel (A type of TCA peel), Jessner’s, Glycolic (alpha-hydroxy) acid, Flower and Salicylic (beta-hydroxy) acids for his medium and deep peels.

Following a TCA peel procedure, the patient feels as if they have a sun burn for about a day.

The other types of peels have warmth feeling for about one day. The skin turns from pink to light brown (in the case of a TCA peel) and peels in 5 – 7 days. Once the peeling is complete, the new, younger skin is visible and the brown spots are typically gone or much lighter. Makeup can be applied on day 7.

Dr. Mueller is a huge proponent of the use of sunscreen. He even recommends the use of SPF make-ups. These are very important, especially following chemical peels, as the new skin is very sensitive and vulnerable to sunlight. In order to maintain healthy skin following your peel, Dr. Mueller recommends that you maintain, or begin, your home skin-care regimen.

A FEW WORDS ON HOME SKIN CARE PRODUCTS

Do you ever wonder why there are certain companies that have a new “latest and greatest” product in their TV commercials every month or two? The answer is marketing and peak sales.

If you spent \$150 for one ounce of an exfoliant and it burned your skin, would you keep it?

Most people asked would return it or never use it again. So, while these retail companies advertise that they have an alpha-hydroxy or beta-hydroxy acid in their product, they also add a buffer (a base) to take away the sting. What this does to the acid is it changes the pH. Once the pH changes, the acid is completely inactivated and cannot even penetrate the skin. Therefore, the expensive \$150 per ounce peeling agent is nothing more than an expensive moisturizer. So, once the company’s profits start to decrease due to dissatisfaction with the product, they release a new product that promises even better results. The truth is that these over the counter products do not work for the most part.

Only medical-grade skin care products will truly penetrate, exfoliate, and nourish the skin. Dr. Mueller recommends Retin-A, toners, alpha and beta hydroxyl acids, hydroquinones and vitamin – C serums as the basis for home lifetime skin care. He will review recommendations with his clients based on their specific needs.

LASER SKIN RESURFACING

Our skin ages due to sun exposure, environmental and genetic factors, and smoking. As the skin ages, it begins to lose elasticity, collagen breaks down, and wrinkles form. There are many types of non-surgical skin treatments to address facial and neck wrinkles. These include chemical peels, microdermabrasion, and laser resurfacing. However, chemical peels and microdermabrasion only treat superficial, mild wrinkles. Only laser resurfacing can address deep layers of wrinkles, acne scarring and other types of skin conditions. It will also eliminate brown spots, spider veins and tightens the skin.

WHY LASER RESURFACING?

Laser skin resurfacing is still the gold standard for improvement of wrinkles and can remove decades of aging in a short period of time. The procedure is performed with an “ultra-pulsed” CO2 laser. This is an ablative type of laser that uses a specialized beam of light energy that is absorbed by the skin, reorganizes collagen fibers, tightens the skin and greatly reduces wrinkles. There are two basic types of resurfacing: aggressive full resurfacing and fractional resurfacing. Fractional resurfacing basically means that a fraction of the total skin surface area is being treated. The amount of down-time depends on the depth of the beam, the total surface area treated and the number of passes. Be wary of promises of “light peels” with minimal down-time. This really means little to no satisfactory results and only less money in your wallet. Also beware of those promising that a process called “Thermage” gives the, “same results as laser resurfacing with much less down-time.” There is no comparison between CO2 laser and Thermage. Thermage gives little to no results and is sold as a procedure by those not trained in CO2 laser surgery. The more down-time a patient is willing to accept, the greater the results. It is not too much to endure to have 10 -14 days of healing to take away 30 – 50 years of sun damage and aging. Dr. Mueller has been performing CO2 laser resurfacing for over 15 years.

Although Dr. Mueller has used almost every skin laser on the market over the years, he uses the Lumenis Active FX and Deep FX CO2 laser for its superior results and predictability.

AM I A CANDIDATE FOR LASER RESURFACING?

Laser resurfacing can be safely performed on patients of all ages. Ideal patients are those with mild to moderate facial wrinkles, little to no skin sagging and those with red and brown sun or age spots. If a patient has deep skin wrinkling and significant sagging skin, a face lift procedure would be more beneficial in combination with CO2 skin resurfacing.

THE PROCEDURE AND RECOVERY

Patients can choose to have selected areas treated such as the periocular (eye) and perioral (nasolabial fold, upper and lower lip and chin areas), or they can have the entire face and / or neck treated. The length of the procedure depends on what areas are being treated, the number of passes, and whether any other procedures (such as lip and nasolabial fold fillers) are also being performed. The procedure can be performed with either local anesthesia or IV anesthesia.

Topical gel anesthetics are used as well.

As stated, the amount of healing down-time depends on the patient. A light fractional resurfacing will take 3 – 5 days to heal. A moderate to aggressive fractional, multi-pass treatment will take 7 -14 days to heal with the patient being able to wear makeup after about 7 – 9 days. An aggressive full laser resurfacing will take 3 – 4 weeks to heal with the patient able to wear makeup after 12 – 14 days. This is where the consultation with Dr. Mueller is very important. After a full examination and a discussion with the patient, the exact treatment type can be customized. Dr. Mueller also customizes a pre- and post-laser skin regimen to help prevent post-operative complications. Following this prescribed treatment is paramount to the success of the healing process. You will see how simple it is to turn back the hands of time

FACIAL & NECK LIPOSUCTION (LIPOSCULPTURE)

Facial liposuction is a procedure that involves the removal of excess fat from the face and neck in a sculpting fashion. This can produce some dramatic effects in the aging face by removing and sculpting fat deposits. Removing too much can be detrimental by leaving too much laxity in the skin or concave defects. Therefore, liposculpture is recommended to be performed alone in younger patients with good skin elasticity or patients that have a genetic predisposition for fat deposits. In older patients, it is performed in combination with other procedures such as facelift, neck lift and chin implants.

The most common areas to treat with liposculpture are the submental region (below the chin) and the jowl region of the lower jaw. While it is not a treatment for obesity or weight loss, liposculpture removes and reduces persistent and unwanted fat deposits that are typically resistant to exercise and dieting.

AM I A CANDIDATE FOR FACIAL LIPOSCULPTURE?

As stated, liposculpture alone is usually indicated for patients in their 30's and 40's who have a nice skin drape. In older individuals, liposculpture is utilized in combination with face lift, neck lift, and frequently, chin implants. Chin implants act to give some definition to the chin, but more importantly, it tightens up the loose skin following the removal of fat. The profile is also improved. If there is excessive skin, Dr. Mueller will recommend a neck lift procedure.

Women's skin tends to respond better than men's with respect to liposculpture.

THE LIPOSCULPTURE PROCEDURE

The procedure can be performed either under local anesthesia or IV anesthesia. Small incisions are made under the chin and in a crease behind the earlobes. These incisions heal with little to no notice after complete healing.

Recovery last about 3 – 7 days, depending on the treatment. An elastic head wrap is worn for several days during the day, and for a week to 10 days at bed time. Dr. Mueller likes you to be up and about that evening; walking around the house and sitting up in a chair. You may return to normal exercise activity in 10 days to 2 weeks.

BUCCAL (CHEEK) FAT PAD REDUCTION

For patients that have very full cheeks, either due to heredity or the shape of their face, buccal fat pad reduction is a common facial cosmetic surgery procedure that slims and sculpts the cheeks. The buccal fat pad is a large encased, dumbbell-shaped pad of fat that extends from beneath the cheek bone up to the temporal region above and in front of the ear. This fat pad can, in some patients, give the appearance of "chubby cheeks." Selective removal of the lower part of the fat pad, the part that resides under the cheek bone, can enhance, thin and sculpt the cheeks.

The procedure can be performed with local anesthesia or IV anesthesia. Small incisions are made inside the mouth adjacent to the upper molar teeth. The fat is removed and the incisions are closed with dissolving sutures. The procedure takes about 15 – 20 minutes per side. The recovery is about 3 – 5 days. Results are almost immediate, but the final results are realized in about 2 weeks. Dr. Mueller performs this procedure alone or in combination with face lift, facial implants, liposculpture, and jaw osteotomy (orthognathic surgery) procedures.

