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Chemical Peels

Myth #1: All chemical peels are the same

Not all peels are created equal. "Chemical peel" is actually just a general classification for a number of chemical treatments used to exfoliate and rejuvenate the skin. Some are stronger than others and they provide varying results depending on the skin-saving effects you're after.

Myth #2: Getting a chemical peels means lots of downtime

Post-peel recovery time depends on the type and strength of peel you've had, but many don't call for downtime. For example, the common alpha-hydroxy and glycolic acid peels have little or no recovery time.

Myth #3: Chemical peels don't really do anything

If you think chemical peels are just another skin care promise that doesn't deliver, think again. After all, Cameron Diaz, Halle Berry and the other bevy of Hollywood stars who reportedly love them can't be wrong. Chemical peels can be effective for photo-aging, such as age spots and wrinkles, improving acne and modest acne scarring, and they're also very effective at exfoliating and smoothing the skin, as well as improving skin texture.

Myth #4: Chemical peels are bad for you

The word "chemical" might not sound like something you should ever associate with your skin, but when performed correctly chemical peels are a safe way to improve your skin. Many chemical peels actually use naturally occurring acids found in fruits in the case of alpha hydroxy acid, and other foods like sugar cane in the case of glycolic peels.

Myth #5: Chemical peels hurt

During some peels (a TCA or Phenol peel for example), the chemicals act as an anesthetic so pain is minimal. During alpha hydroxy acid peels, which are milder than TCA or Phenol peels, the only feeling is a slight stinging sensation during the treatment.

Myth #6: You should only get one if you have skin problems

While there are chemical peels that specifically target acne, acne scarring or sun spots, the most popular use of chemical peels is for facial skin regeneration (i.e. getting your glow back), and they're ideal for anyone who wants to improve the look of their skin.

Myth #7: They cause your skin to literally "peel off"

Contrary to what you might think, nothing actually 'peels off' during a chemical peel. A chemical solution is applied to the face, and works by dissolving the upper layers of the skin. As the tissue is dissolved, a wound is created on the skin which stimulates the body's healing response, causing new tissue to emerge, which is smoother and has improved texture.

Myth #8: At-home chemical peels work just as well

There are some effective at-home options available, but the treatment you get in a physician's office will typically be more concentrated and last longer.

Myth #9: Anyone can perform a chemical peel

Chemical peels are often performed at spas, but keep in mind that the person administering the treatment might not be as experienced as they should be. Any skin treatments should be performed either by or under the guidance of a board certified physician with knowledge of the skin to ensure optimal results and a safe procedure.

Myth #10: They take a long time

No time? No problem. Generally a chemical peel won't take more than 20 minutes. The skin is cleansed and a chemical solution is applied. The specific amount of time your treatment takes will depend on the type and strength of peel, but the procedure is not usually a lengthy one.