

# Skin

## EXPERTS

Vol. 2 No. 2

EXPERTISE FOR THE *life* OF YOUR SKIN<sup>SM</sup>

# Chemical Peels and Microdermabrasion for Skin of Color



## CHEMICAL PEELS

Chemical peels are skin treatments used to correct skin problems ranging from acne to discoloration. There is a long-standing myth that chemical peels are not an appropriate treatment option for people with skin of color. However, chemical peels can be very effective treatments when performed by dermatologists who understand how to treat skin of color.

### Why should I get a chemical peel?

Chemical peels have several benefits, including increased collagen production and reductions in pore size, excess surface oil and visible signs of aging. Chemical peels are an effective treatment for hyperpigmentation (dark spots) and acne.

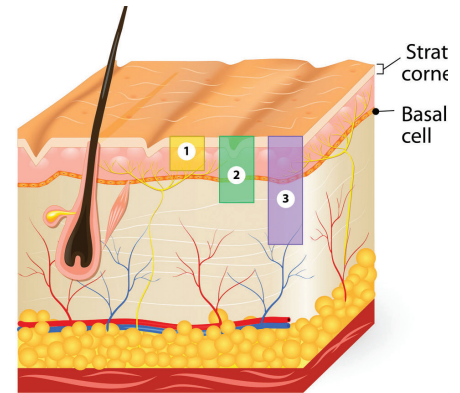
### What is involved with a chemical peel?

An acid solution is applied to the skin to remove dead skin cells; this solution is then washed off. You may feel a tingling, itching or burning sensation. Chemical peels are brief procedures that require very little recovery time, although multiple treatments are usually necessary to achieve the best results.

### What types of peels are there?

Many chemical peels use a combination of different acids tailored to treat the patient's condition. Chemical peels are divided into three types:

- **Superficial peels:** These peels affect the top layer of the skin and are very unlikely to cause complications in skin of color. Salicylic, glycolic and mandelic peels can be used to treat acne, hyperpigmentation and melasma in patients with skin of color.
- **Medium-depth peels:** These peels penetrate to the upper portion of the second layer of moderately wrinkled or scarred skin. Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) peels are common medium-depth peels; however, because TCA can penetrate the skin deeper than some other acids, a lower concentration should be used in patients of color.
- **Deep chemical peels:** These include peels with phenol and penetrate to the lower portion of the second layer of skin. These peels are used to treat deep wrinkles, scars or skin that has been severely damaged by the sun. These peels should not be performed on patients with skin of color.



### Are there side effects?

Potential complications of a chemical peel may include burning, itching, redness or swelling, and patients of color may experience temporary darkening (post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation). Therefore, patients should only receive these treatments in a dermatologist's office with expertise in treating darker skin tones.

### How should I prepare?

You should discontinue the use of topical retinoids (i.e. Retin-A) before the procedure due to the potential for an adverse reaction. Following the procedure, you should wear a moisturizer and a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or above daily.

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## Chemicals Peels and Microdermabrasion for Skin of Color

### MICRODERMABRASION

Microdermabrasion is a skin treatment that involves gently abrading away the top layer of the skin. It is a great option for people with sensitive skin who are unable to tolerate chemical peels.

### Why should I have microdermabrasion?

Microdermabrasion can be used to treat a variety of skin conditions including enlarged pores, mild acne, uneven skin tone and fine wrinkles. Microdermabrasion not only helps to

remove unwanted irregularities in the skin, but also stimulates the production of collagen.

### What is involved?

A closed vacuum device is used to gently spray aluminum oxide crystals through a tube into a hand piece placed onto the skin. The machine combines the gentle mixture of particles with suction to remove the damaged outer layers of your skin. Treatments can take up to 30 minutes and repeated treatments are often necessary.

### Are there side effects?

Some patients may experience mild redness, irritation or dryness after the procedure. This can result in dark patches or brown streaks, which can take several weeks to resolve. Scarring can also occur if microdermabrasion is used too aggressively. Generally, more conservative parameters should be used to avoid discoloration, particularly in skin of color.

### WHAT IS THE RIGHT TREATMENT FOR YOU?

Chemical peels and microdermabrasion are excellent treatment options for patients with discoloration and other skin issues. Minimal down time is required. ASDS members are board-certified in dermatology and are trained and experienced in both surgical and minimally invasive treatments to improve the health, function and beauty of your skin. ASDS members have training and expertise in treating all skin types and offer a variety of skin rejuvenation techniques. Find a dermatologic surgeon near you at [asds.net](http://asds.net).

