

## Chemical Peel Basics

### Freshen Your Look Once and For All

Chrissy Spehar

Maybe you've noticed a few too many wrinkles for your liking. Maybe those years of sun bathing without protection have caught up to you. Or maybe you're just ready to freshen your look in a serious way. Whatever the case, a chemical peel might be the answer.

#### A Chemical What?

Chemical peels, otherwise known as chemexfoliation or derma-peels, are used to remove the outermost layer of the skin and reveal the fresh, less-wrinkled layer below. In these procedures, a chemical formula is placed on the skin, which then blisters and peels off. Depending on the depth of the peel--meaning the strength of the

"Egyptians write of using fruits (glycolic acid) and milk (lactic acid) to help keep the skin bright. The destruction caused by chemical exfoliation is recognized by the depth of its impact." According to O'Neil Andrew, the different levels of chemical peels include light, which exfoliates surface cells; medium, which removes the epidermis to the top of the dermis; and deep, in which the dermis is destroyed and scarring can occur. "Deep peels are used to correct acne scarring and deep wrinkles and to re-texturize the skin in total," O'Neil Andrew says. "These deep peels, known as phenolic acid peels, are only performed by licensed physicians, preferably a dermatologist or plastic surgeon."



Chemical peels can ease the fine lines and blemishes that often develop over time.

acid applied to the skin--the blistering process can take three to fourteen days.

Alison O'Neil Andrew, a licensed esthetician and founder of the Atlanta-based Beauty Becomes You Foundation, an esthetic nonprofit organization for seniors, explains the process. "Chemical peels have been used since the beginning of time," she says.

#### Is Peeling for You?

Chemical peels effectively improve the feel and appearance of the skin by reducing fine lines and wrinkles caused by sun exposure, aging, and genetics. They can also treat age spots, freckles, mild scarring, and other blemishes,

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*How many  
cares one loses  
when one  
decides not to  
be something,  
but to be  
someone.*

-Coco Chanel

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including those caused by certain types of acne. "If you are trying to brighten your skin, rid yourself of light wrinkles, or control acne, then light- to medium-depth chemical peels may do the trick," says O'Neil Andrew.

All skin colors and types can benefit from chemical peels, though it's necessary to check with your skin care professional about which peel might be right for you. If you're taking acne medication, such as Retin A or Accutane, talk to your clinician about stopping the medication before and during treatment to avoid side effects or complications.

## What to Expect

Once you've decided to receive a peel, here's what you can expect: The skin is cleansed thoroughly with an oil-reducing solution, and protective materials are placed on the eyes and hair. One or more chemical mixtures--such as glycolic acid, trichloroacetic acid, salicylic acid, lactic acid, or carbolic acid (phenol)--are dabbed onto the areas of the skin to be treated. The chemicals then react with the skin to produce a "controlled wound," allowing new cells to regenerate and emerge.

A warming or stinging sensation will occur for most patients during the treatment, and it will last about five or ten minutes. Soothing compresses may be applied to help with the discomfort. After most chemical peels, the skin will look as though it has been sunburned. Then it will begin to peel and look scaly, a process that lasts several days. Once the skin heals, it will look fresher, softer, and younger.

Depending on the depth of your peel, you may want to repeat the procedure in a few weeks or months. "Generally, a light peel can be given safely every one to two weeks if desired, a medium peel every three, six, or nine months, and a deep peel only once in a lifetime, perhaps twice," says O'Neil Andrew.

Before committing to a chemical peel, be sure to check with your skin care professional or doctor about any current medications that might interfere with the treatment. Also, determine with your practitioner if there's a need to take any antibiotics or antiviral

medications during treatment to avoid infection to the newly exposed, more vulnerable skin.

## Recovery Requirements

Recovery time varies depending on the intensity of the peel you elect, a choice your practitioner will help you determine. A light peel generally takes a few days to heal. A medium peel will cause the skin to darken and take on what is considered a "brown paper bag" appearance, which, over the course of five to seven days, usually peels away, exposing lovely, fresh, pink skin. And a deep peel may take six weeks or more to fully recover.

For very deep peels, post-treatment bandages might be necessary. Your practitioner will provide you with a full explanation of how to best care for your bandages until the skin is fully restored.

Your practitioner will provide a complete consultation on the specific home care practices that best suit your individual peel to ensure you get the most from the treatment. However, you can generally count on the following:

-Avoid sun exposure until all blistering has subsided and the skin has regained its normal color.

-Avoid applying moisturizers or other products to your skin until it has completely recovered. Check with your skin care professional about which products are safe to use while the skin is healing.

Chemical peels are oftentimes a great solution to old skin problems, providing a fresher, younger-looking complexion free of lines and blemishes you may have considered permanent. Discuss the option with your skin care professional.



**Your skin care practitioner will work with you to determine which type of peel is best for you.**

# Nature's Nutritional Wonder

## Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables are powerful foods that can help prevent many forms of cancer, reduce existing cancer tumors, and aid in the prevention of heart disease. Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, arugula, kale, and Brussels sprouts all contain isothiocyanates--a group of chemicals that break down carcinogens in the body, helping to metabolize toxins. Studies show that people who eat two to three servings of cruciferous vegetables each week lower their risk of breast cancer, colon cancer, and lung cancer. A National Cancer Institute study found that eating three helpings of crucifers a week dropped prostate cancer risk by 50 percent. The powerful chemicals in these veggies also reduce homocysteine levels, a known precursor to heart disease.

Cruciferous vegetables are low in calories and high in fiber and the chromium found in these foods helps regulate blood sugar and insulin function, key factors in keeping diabetes at bay. Even with all the benefits that crucifers provide, many people refuse to

eat them because of their strong taste. But a little creativity can go a long way in making these wonderful foods palatable: try cream of broccoli soup, cauliflower au gratin, stuffed cabbage, or the recipe below--the possibilities are endless.

### BRUSSELS SPROUTS FOR THE MEAT-AND-POTATOES EATER

*1 pound fresh Brussels sprouts, washed, stems trimmed, and outer leaves removed*  
*1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil*  
*2 tablespoons unsalted butter*  
*3 tablespoons cider vinegar*  
*1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese*  
*Salt and pepper, to taste*

Thinly slice Brussels sprouts, either in a food processor fitted with a slicing blade, or by hand. Heat a heavy, nonstick skillet. Add olive oil and butter, swirling the pan so that the butter melts. Saute sliced Brussels sprouts for 5 minutes. Add cider vinegar and grated Parmesan, stirring briefly to incorporate. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serves four--who will all be healthier for it!



Cruciferous veggies help ward off disease.

# High Time for Tea

## Discover the Healing Properties of Taking Tea

The health research is enough to make you forego the latte for strong brewed tea instead. Name your color -- black, white, green, even red -- teas are packed with disease-preventing antioxidants (more than some fruits and vegetables) and contain vitamins, minerals, and at least half the caffeine of coffee.

Fortified with free radical-fighting polyphenols, tea drinkers have a reduced risk of many different cancers, in particular stomach, colorectal, and even skin cancer. Tea drinkers also have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, and high cholesterol. Containing anti-inflammatory and arthritis-preventing properties, tea also helps stimulate the immune system and protect the liver against toxins.

But you have to drink up. Most research points to five or so cups of brewed tea each day to reap the health benefits. Decaf tea loses some but not much of its health punch, due to extra processing.

All traditional tea -- white, green, oolong, and black -- is derived from the leaves of an evergreen tree called the *Camellia sinensis*, and all contain the health-promoting polyphenols. White tea is made from young tea leaves, dried in the sun without fermentation or processing. Green tea is dried with hot air after picking, so it retains its color but is not fermented. Oolong tea, sometimes referred to as "brown" tea, is fermented but not processed to the point of black tea. Black tea, on the other hand, is fully fermented, which

accounts for the color of the leaves and its stronger flavor.

Rooibos, or red tea, is naturally caffeine-free and from the *Aspalathus linearis*, a shrub that grows only at high altitude near Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Herbal teas are made from a variety of plants, roots, bark, seeds, and flowers and are technically herbal infusions rather than tea. Though they don't contain the same antioxidants and haven't received the same research-based accolades as traditional tea, the herbs in these infusions have certain healing properties that have been used for centuries to treat many common health issues.

*Kindness in  
words creates  
confidence.  
Kindness in  
thinking creates  
profoundness.  
Kindness in  
giving creates  
love.*

-Lao-Tzu

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