

## Postoperative Instructions for your Chemical Peel Procedure

The chemical face peel is a resurfacing procedure designed to rejuvenate the facial and or neck skin. The face peel is a safe and effective procedure but the **patient compliance and ability to follow directions are paramount for the success**. Failure to obey your doctor's orders can lead to serious complications such as **herpes or bacterial infection or permanent scarring**. Dr. Heir gives you a very specific routine to follow during the first week or two of recovery. It's essential that you follow these instructions to the letter, even if a friend has had the same procedure and was given different instructions.

You will feel as though your skin has a windburn or sunburn and will find that your skin is tight. Do not make excessive or widely exaggerated facial expressions. This can cause tearing of the skin and bleeding, hence -- scarring. Just let your skin heal naturally and **DO NOT PEEL or TUG on ANY skin that may peel from the face**. You can cause excessive damage resulting in severe scarring if you do this. Below are general information and a typical after care instruction sheet. It is important for you to understand the information provided and use it as a guide. Since every patient heals at a different pace and has specific needs, Dr. Heir and his skin care specialist will guide you during your healing process and adjust specific instructions if necessary, to achieve optimal results.

### **Pain and Medications:**

Take all your medications given to you at your preoperative visit as prescribed.

You can expect stinging pain and swelling. Any discomfort immediately felt generally lasts 4-6 hours; taking your pain medication and applying cold compresses to the treated areas of the face can relieve it. Your chemical skin resurfacing is a safe and predictable procedure, but is reliant on multiple medications to prevent viral and bacterial infection, reduce swelling, control discomfort and assist in sleeping.

Depending on your procedure and history, you may be given Valtrex (anti-herpes medication) – all laser and chemical patients are more susceptible to herpes outbreak after their treatment. This medication is very important, as herpes outbreak can cause permanent scarring. This medication is taken every 12 hours. We will have you begin this medication 48 hours before your laser surgery and continue taking them until they are gone.

Replacement hormones may be continued; however, **oral contraceptive pills (birth control pills) should be discontinued for one month to prevent discoloration of the skin.**

If you experience itching as you heal you may take Benedryl.

### **Cold Compresses:**

We recommend that you take a salad bowl and wash it well. Fill it with water and ice cubes and soak several wash cloths (or gauze) in the bowl and keep the bowl in the refrigerator. Apply the cold cloth to the face and this will ease the discomfort and assist the swelling. When the cloth becomes warm, replace it with a new cold soak cloth. You can do this as much as you wish, but doing this will eventually wash off the healing cream, so remember to place a good coat over the treated areas when needed. Remember, you can use as many cold soaks and as much healing cream as you wish for the first 48 hours. **DO NOT RUB OR WIPE THE TREATED AREAS WITH THE WASH CLOTH OR GAUZE. THIS WILL CAUSE PERMANENT SCARRING.**

### **Rest and Swelling:**

Rest for the entire day after your chemical peel. Sleeping in an elevated position (two to three pillows under your head) and cold compresses may assist in reducing swelling. Swelling may increase 24 to 48 hours after the procedure, depending upon the size and location of the treated areas. Eyelids will generally have more swelling than other areas. This is your body's normal response to trauma. Iced water soaked gauze or washcloths will ease the discomfort and decrease swelling after eyelid surgery or laser resurfacing.

### **Diet:**

Upon arriving home from surgery, begin with clear liquids until fully awake then begin regular food intake with soft foods. Beginning the second day you may increase your foods to your normal diet. Try not to move the treated area excessively. If the mouth area is involved, it may be easier

to drink through a straw. Remember to drink plenty of fluids over the next several weeks as your skin is healing.

**Tobacco** - **DO NOT SMOKE** for a minimum of 8 weeks after surgery. This significantly can slow the healing process.

**Exercise** - Avoid extreme physical activity including athletic activities. You may resume light walking three days after your peel. Aerobic exercise, weight training, heavy lifting, and straining may be gradually resumed 2-3 weeks after surgery.

**Bathing** - You may shower and wash your hair beginning the day after surgery. Let tepid shower water run over your face.

### **Sunscreen and Makeup:**

When skin is free from peeling and crusting and Vaseline is no longer required during the daytime ( Approx. 7-10 days) you should be able to use water-based makeup lightly over the areas. You must wear a sun block of SPF 15 or greater **under** your makeup, apply 30 minutes prior to exposure and frequently. Cold cream or cleansing products and cotton balls may remove makeup. If there is a question about this wait until you see Dr. Heir before you apply any cosmetics.

Do not TWEEZE YOUR EYEBROWS for one week following surgery

Prolonged exposure to the sun may cause discoloration and should be avoided for 6 months. Use a sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 at all times. A sunscreen, factor 15 or greater, should be used when in the sun. We suggest wearing a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses to reduce sun exposure when going outside.

The intense red color will fade rapidly, but pink coloration will remain for 6-8 weeks. You can schedule an appointment with our skin care specialist to assist you in choosing special coverage makeup during your postoperative visits. We will be happy to assist you in the use of a sun block and special cover up makeup.

### **Skin Care:**

Do not apply any type of glycolic acid, Retin- A, or exfoliation products as this can severely damage or irritate the skin. During the entire time of healing or the skin will become irritated. Dr. Heir will advise you when you may begin more aggressive skin care products. A few very small whiteheads may appear in the treated areas. These usually disappear in 2-3 weeks without specific treatment.

Do not TWEEZE YOUR EYEBROWS or WAX any facial hair for 2-3 weeks week following your chemical peel.

### **What to Expect After Your Peel:**

The day of your face peel, you will present to the office without any makeup. When you awaken, your face will feel sunburned but you will not be in extreme pain. We will coat your face with Vaseline before you leave our office. You will continue to apply this until your postoperative appointment.

### **Day # 1- 4:**

- 1) Beginning the first day after surgery, rinse your face six times a day with lukewarm water. This is done most easily in a slow-running shower, or with a small hand sprayer.
- 2) Pat the skin dry (**Do Not Rub**) and apply Vaseline to the peeled areas after washing. Continue this rinsing for about 1 week or as long as there is crusting remaining on the face.
- 3) Keep Vaseline on your face
- 4) Vaseline should be kept continuously on your face (enough to keep moisturized but do not overcoat it) and by the fourth day, your skin will become brown and leathery and will begin to peel.

The peeling stage usually lasts 1-2 days and the newly formed skin will be pink in color and return to normal color over the next several days or weeks. Within 24-36 hours some small blisters may form and rupture, exuding fluid; this is common and should cause no concern. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO NOT PICK AT THE PEELING SKIN. IT IS VERY TEMPTING TO TRY TO PEEL**

**OFF THE SKIN, BUT THIS CAN CAUSE PERMANENT SCARRING. LET THE SKIN FALL OFF BY ITSELF.**

**Day# 5- 7:**

- 1) Continue rinsing your face six times a day with lukewarm water. Use your hands or cotton balls, not a washcloth or gauze.

When your skin finishes peeling (usually by day 5-6) you should use a gentle, hypoallergenic moisturizer such as Cetaphil Moisturizer during the day and Vaseline at night. Keeping your new skin moisturized will speed your recovery. Our office will assist you in choosing the required lotions and cleansers. After your skin peels, you may wash it gently with your fingers only (no washcloths yet) twice a day with Cetaphil cleanser or other hypoallergenic cleansers. After the first week, you will have a delicate new skin, which must toughen.

**Weeks # 2-3:**

- 1) You will cleanse your face as usual but be instructed to use a gentle-formulated cleanser or Cetaphil cleanser. Use your hands or cotton balls, not a washcloth.
- 2) Keep face moist with cold cream or moisturizing cream. You may be instructed to use Vaseline at night or a special moisturizing cream or lotion.

**Reasons To Call The Doctor**

**If, at any time following surgery, you develop fever blisters, experience pain in the area of treated skin, or develop a fever greater than 101.5 degrees you should contact Dr. Heir by calling him at 916-419-4588. If the office is closed, please dial ext. 5 to be connected with Dr. Heir's cell phone.**