

OFFICE-BASED SKIN TREATMENTS: CHEMICAL PEELS AND DERMABRASION

Non-surgical facial rejuvenation techniques are becoming increasingly popular. The obvious advantages include lower costs and faster recovery times. Not all of the effects of aging and sun damage can be reversed with these resurfacing techniques. For example, correction of deep wrinkles and sagging tissues may best be treated with other means. However, blemishes in the skin and fine wrinkles can be dramatically improved with the proper application of chemical peels and/or dermabrasion. A moderate amount of skin tightening can also be expected because of the stimulation and reorganization of collagen proteins beneath the surface. It is not surprising that these techniques are growing more popular every year.

CHEMICAL PEELS

Time-tested and reliable, the techniques of chemical peeling can give impressive results. The concept behind chemical peels is that the superficial and even the intermediate layers of the skin are treated with topical agents for a set period of time. This stimulates turnover of the outermost skin cells and replacement with fresh new skin cells from beneath. Minor skin blemishes, age spots, acne scars, and fine wrinkles are diminished or even completely erased. Beyond this, the underlying networks of collagen and elastin proteins that support the skin are also affected. The reorganization and strengthening of these protein networks is what causes the moderate skin tightening effect that can be accomplished with resurfacing procedures. Superficial peels usually include glycolic acid or salicylic acid. These are less aggressive but have minimal recovery time. TCA peels and Jessner peels are medium depth and can correct more significant sun damage and wrinkles. With these peels there is expected to be some mild to moderate discomfort and redness for 7-10 days. Chemical peels can be performed in conjunction with any of the other rejuvenation procedures discussed in this packet.

DERMABRASION

Dermabrasion involves physical removal of the superficial layers of the skin for the purpose of scar revision or improvement in blemishes and wrinkles. The surgeon uses an abrasive pad or wheel to systematically treat the affected areas. The underlying layers of skin will regenerate a new layer on the surface in 7-10 days. A common application of this technique is to treat the deep lines around the mouth.