

## Why Patients And Professionals Prefer Chemical Peels

The continuous search for the fountain of youth has sparked a flurry of new technologies targeting the signs of aging. Procedures such as laser resurfacing, photo rejuvenation, dermabrasion and injectable fillers are supplanting deep chemical peels to minimize wrinkles and sagging skin. However, superficial and medium-depth chemical peels continue to be the treatment of choice for giving skin an overall more youthful appearance by improving its tone and texture.



According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, chemical peels are the second-most-common non-surgical cosmetic procedure performed by medical professionals and clinical estheticians today. This cornerstone of topical treatments offers numerous advantages to the skincare professional and the patient.

### Safe And Effective

When chemical peels were introduced 50 years ago, the formulations were highly aggressive. Single or multiple acid peels in a carrier base were effective in triggering the regeneration of new skin cells, but also were prone to complications such as irritation and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

Newer chemical peel formulations have evolved into skin-friendly blends that include biocompatible lactic and citric acids, buffering agents such as licorice extract (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and willow bark to minimize irritation to skin, as well as topical antioxidants to infuse skin with restorative nutrients.

The combination of ingredients feeds and strengthens new skin while exfoliating away dead surface cells. The changes often occur at a cellular level and aren't always apparent to the naked eye. This feature makes superficial chemical peels especially popular with busy patients who are seeking effective treatments that can be done quickly with little or no downtime. Clients can walk right back into their daily routine following a lunchtime treatment, and the only visible proof is brighter and firmer-looking skin.

### Treatable Conditions

Superficial chemical peels have a proven track record for correcting many difficult skin conditions including acne, hyperpigmentation, rosacea, psoriasis and

skin-fighting degradation from chronological and environmental aging. The variety of blends available allows the skincare professional to customize protocols and effectively address specific skin conditions.

For treating acneic skin types, look for a modified Jessner's solution with ingredients such as kojic acid for tyrosinase-inhibiting action and antibacterial properties. For hyperpigmentation, look for lightening ingredients such as kojic acid, azelaic acid, L-arbutin, licorice and *Rumex crispus*. Rosacea requires treatment with milder formulations than other conditions to avoid overheating skin and possibly causing flare-ups. Utilizing formulations containing the effective anti-inflammatory ingredients bisabolol, willowherb and willow bark help keep sensitive skin types calm during and after treatment. Patients who are seeking skin rejuvenation or sun-damage repair, chemical peels with retinol, TCA, chasteberry and soy isoflavones will stimulate cell turnover with minimal irritation and excellent results.

Once the selected chemical peel has been applied to skin, the newer cells beneath the impacted stratum corneum are able to more effectively absorb beneficial nutrients needed to even skin tone, stimulate cell turnover and rebuild collagen—the skin's support system—ultimately improving the overall health and appearance of the skin.

Following this loosening of the stratum corneum, it is an ideal time to spot-treat hyperpigmentation and fine lines with tyrosinase inhibitors, peptides and growth factors, as well as infuse weakened skin with restorative antioxidants and polyphenols that combat free-radical damage.



**Graph 1** The favorable ratio between the cost per treatment (CPT) and the number (#) of treatments per bottle from each product.

Products	Total Cost	# Of Treatments	CPT
Modified Jessner's Solution (2 ounces)	\$65	20 - 30	\$2.16 - \$3.25
Modified TCA Solution (4 ounces)	\$145	40 - 60	\$2.41 - \$3.63
Salicylic Acid Formulation (3.3 ounces)	\$65	30 - 50	\$1.30 - \$2.16
Retinol & Lactic Formulation (3.3 ounces)	\$125	30 - 50	\$2.50 - \$4.16

Introduce anti-inflammatory topicals during treatments to calm skin sensitized by UV overexposure, pollutants and irritating cosmetics. Customize treatments for dry and dehydrated skin with hygroscopic agents, such as hyaluronic acid, that attract and retain cellular moisture. Always seal and occlude the protocol with a broad-spectrum sunscreen.

### Home Advantage

While professional treatments are very effective, the patient's homecare regimen can be of even greater importance. Treatment results can be enhanced and prolonged with a customized homecare program. The combination can help maintain healthy skin and a smooth, clear and radiant complexion as well as:

- Prepare skin for treatment.
- Balance moisture content.
- Boost collagen production.
- Help control discoloration.
- Heal treated areas.
- Soothe and reduce inflammation.
- Control oil and acne.
- Diminish fine lines and wrinkles.

One of the most exciting ingredients recently introduced into advanced clinical skincare products for home and professional use is epidermal growth factor, or EGF. Daily use of EGF encourages aging skin to function more like young skin by stimulating increased cell turnover to thicken and strengthen skin and speed healing when injury does occur.

Topical peptides are another new class of anti-aging ingredients now available. One of these peptides, known as acetyl hexapeptide-3, produces similar anti-wrinkle activity to Botox® cosmetic injections by relaxing facial muscle contractions that can lead to wrinkles. The skin-tightening effect is immediate and results in a smoother, less-furrowed complexion, especially on the forehead and around the eyes. Palmitoyl pentapeptide-3 penetrates top layers of the stratum corneum to stimulate the production of collagens type I and IV, critical in preserving skin's youthful characteristics.

### Building Business

This advanced generation of skin-friendly formulas has fueled chemical-peel demand. Worldwide use of chemical peels generated fees of \$1.1 billion in 2001, with treatment volume expected to grow to \$1.7 billion by 2007. Besides being safe, efficient and convenient, chemical peels can be a profitable addition to the spa. When considering chemical peels for the treatment menu, it is important to note the favorable ratio between the cost per treatment (CPT) and the number of treatments per bottle from each product. (see Graph 1.)

If a clinical practice is charging between \$65 and \$125 (depending on market demographics) for a chemical-peel treatment, it is obvious that with just one treatment, the cost of product is paid for immediately. The cost of other products used during the treatment protocol, such as facial cleanser, toner, specialty serums, hydrators and SPF products, need to be factored in as well. When the CPT for companion products is added in to the equation, the total cost of a treatment may still only be \$3 to \$5 for the spa. This adds up to an estimated profit margin of around 95 percent.

While chemical peels may not share the novelty factor associated with high-tech skin-rejuvenation solutions, their tried-and-true results and impressive earnings potential will profit the skincare patient and professional. ❄



*Margaret Ancira is an educator, aesthetician and founder of PCA Advanced Skin Care Systems. She revolutionized the skincare industry in 1990 by developing and marketing the first non-prescription, clinically researched skincare products directly to physicians and clinical estheticians. Today, her chemical peels and advanced topicals are available in 60 countries.*