

What Is a Chemical Peel and Is It Right for My Skin?

A chemical peel is a treatment that uses a carefully selected solution to remove damaged outer layers of the skin. As the skin heals and renews itself, it can look smoother, more even, and clearer. Chemical peels can be used to improve skin texture, tone, fine lines, mild acne, clogged pores, certain types of pigmentation, and sun damage.

At Calvert Dermatology, we offer medical chemical peels and select the appropriate peel based on your skin type, concerns, and treatment goals. The strength and depth of a peel can vary, so not every peel is appropriate for every patient.

How Does a Chemical Peel Work?

A chemical peel uses a solution applied to the skin to create a controlled injury to the outer layers. This causes the treated skin to shed and encourages the skin to regenerate. Chemical peels can be classified as superficial, medium, or deep, depending on how deeply they penetrate the skin. Superficial peels primarily affect the outermost layer and generally have less downtime. Deeper peels reach further into the skin and can produce more significant changes, but they also require more healing time and have a higher risk of complications.

At Calvert Dermatology, the type of peel is selected based on what you are hoping to improve and how your skin is likely to respond.

What Can a Chemical Peel Improve?

Chemical peels may help improve uneven skin texture, dull or uneven skin tone, fine lines, mild acne and clogged pores, certain types of hyperpigmentation, sun damage, the appearance of some acne scars. At Calvert Dermatology, our goal is to choose a treatment that addresses your specific concerns rather than using the same peel for every patient.

What Should I Expect During a Chemical Peel?

Before your treatment, your dermatologist will evaluate your skin and discuss your goals. You may also be given instructions for preparing your skin before the peel. During treatment, the skin is cleansed and the chemical solution is carefully applied. Depending on the type of peel, you may feel warmth, tingling, or a burning sensation while the solution is on the skin.

After the treatment, your skin may be red, tight, dry, or sensitive. With some peels, the skin will gradually flake or peel over the following days. How much peeling occurs depends on the type and strength of the treatment.

Are Chemical Peels Safe?

Chemical peels are commonly performed by dermatologists, but they are not without risks. Possible side effects include redness, irritation, changes in skin pigmentation, infection, and, less commonly, scarring. The risk generally increases with the depth of the peel.

Pigment changes can be an especially important consideration for patients with darker skin tones. Chemical peels can be performed safely in patients with skin of color, but the type and strength of the peel should be carefully selected by someone experienced in treating different skin types.

Before treatment, be sure to tell your dermatologist about medications you take, previous cosmetic procedures, a history of cold sores, and any tendency to scar easily. Certain medications and skin conditions may affect whether a peel is appropriate for you.

Bottom Line

Chemical peels can improve skin texture, tone, clarity, fine lines, mild acne, and certain types of pigmentation and sun damage. The right peel depends on your skin and what you want to improve. At Calvert Dermatology, we take the time to evaluate your skin and select a chemical peel based on your individual skin type, concerns, and goals. A consultation is the best way to determine whether a chemical peel is appropriate for you and what type of treatment may be most helpful.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my skin actually peel after a chemical peel?

Not necessarily. The amount of peeling depends on the type and strength of the peel. Some lighter treatments cause only mild dryness or scaling, while stronger peels can cause more noticeable peeling.

Can chemical peels help acne?

Yes. Certain chemical peels can help improve mild acne and clogged pores. They may also improve the appearance of some acne scars.

Can I have a chemical peel if I have sensitive skin?

Possibly, but your skin should be evaluated first. The type and strength of the peel can be adjusted based on your skin type and sensitivity.

Resources

1. Calvert Dermatology. Chemical peels. [Calvert Dermatology](#)
2. American Academy of Dermatology. Chemical peels: FAQs. [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
3. American Academy of Dermatology. Chemical peels: Preparation. [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
4. American Academy of Dermatology. Acne scars: Consultation and treatment. [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
5. Samargandy S, Raggio BS. Chemical peels for skin resurfacing. *StatPearls Publishing*. [PubMed](#)
6. Nikalji N, Godse K, Sakhiya J, Patil S, Nadkarni N. Complications of medium depth and deep chemical peels. *J Cutan Aesthet Surg*. [PubMed Central](#)