



# Going Deeper in Search of Beauty Chemical Exfoliation Continues to Appeal to Patients

By Lisa Panzica

**A**h, the chemical peel. On one hand, a slightly controversial yet bona fide method of rejuvenating skin cells. On the other, despite any controversy it is a procedure which has become one of the most popular non-invasive aesthetic treatments on the market.

A fully qualified physician who knows how to administer just the right peel to just the right areas of the face can bring in a large and profitable clientele. That is because nationally tucking in under the Botox injection, the chemical peel is an attractive, lunch-time facial pick-me-up. Patients clamor for it, using its milder

forms to help undo years of cellular damage, and its more stringent forms to alter dramatic imperfections.

Of course, there are detractors. Opponents of the procedure warn of its

ating some precancerous lesions, it is also a way for patients to improve their appearance without invasive surgery. And as formulas are adjusted, the variety of peels has evolved to include some very safe and very effective treatments.

Unlike microdermabrasion which uses micro-crystals to exfoliate the stratum corneum, peels use varying strengths and chemicals to penetrate deeper into the layers of skin. Chemicals peels can be used in tandem with other procedures, such as the surgical facelift or even Microdermabrasion, to provide patients with complete skin resurfacing.

Several types of peels are available. The lightest peel is the alphahydroxy acid, or AHA, peel. These peels include glycolic, lactic, and fruit acid peels. They burn off only the outer layers of the skin to refine wrinkles or dry skin. Patients who use an AHA peel are often looking to balance uneven pigmentation, diminish acne scars, or improve the texture of sun-damaged skin.

Medium peels contain trichloroacetic acids, a chemical which allows deeper penetration to treat more severe acne scars or stronger pigment discoloration.

Deep peels, or phenol peels, are becoming widely rejected by physicians simply because their risks often outweigh their benefits. Because the acid is so strong in a phenol peel, patients often are unable to resume normal activity for two weeks following the procedure. Other risks include permanent lightening of the skin and pain.

The glycolic acid peels (ranging from 70 percent

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dangers: irreparable discoloration, the pain involved, and its potential for lengthy recovery time. They also point out a fact some patients may not fully appreciate: that chemical peels are not a permanent solution to damaged skin. Patients need to continue treatments and adhere to rigid post-procedure skin care; and in the end, they may need Botox or a facelift to ultimately achieve their goals.

Still, chemical exfoliation is a valuable asset in a stable of procedures. It is not only effective in smoothing out skin tone, removing lifelong acne scars, and obliter-

to 99 percent glycolic acid compound) and the beta-hydroxy acid (salicylic acid) peels (ranging from 20 percent to 30 percent salicylic acid in a microsponge delivery system) are among the most effective chemical peels. TCA (10 to 35 percent) has been used for many years and is safe to use at lower concentrations. At higher concentrations, such as 50 percent and above, TCA has a tendency to scar and is less manageable than other agents used for superficial peels. TCA is found in several proprietary peels at varying concentrations, and some kits have instructions and buffering agents so the peel can be diluted as deemed necessary.

Jessner's peel is a combination of salicylic acid 14 percent, lactic acid 14 percent, and resorcinol 14 percent in alcohol. Salicylic acid is lipid soluble; therefore, it is a good peeling agent for comedonal acne. The salicylic acid is able to penetrate the comedones better than other acids. The anti-inflammatory and anesthetic effects of the salicylate result in a decrease in the amount of erythema and discomfort which generally is associated with chemical peels. The most common concentration used today is 20 to 30 percent and can be purchased in easy-to-use kits.

Three combination peels currently being used are CO2 and TCA 35 percent, Jessner's and TCA 35 percent, and glycolic and TCA 35 percent. These peels are as effective as the other medium-depth



Before (left) and After (right)  
exCel Clay Peel Treatment

peels with less chance of scarring and pigment dyschromia.

Not everyone is a good candidate for a chemical peel. In fact, a patient seeking to reduce the appearance of facial wrinkles as

a result of smoking should not consider a peel if she or he still smokes, since recovery time is directly affected. If a person still has ongoing problems with acne, or has unusual scar formations such as keloids, or is taking certain acne drugs including Accutane™, he or she is also not a candidate.

Patients need to be educated on what is a reasonable outcome of a peel. Some realistic goals include a reduction of mild scarring, correction of moderate sun damage, a reduction or eradication of wrinkles, an

improvement of dark skin discoloration, the removal of stubborn blackheads, and a temporary reduction of excessive skin oils.

A chemical peel cannot remove or reduce the appearance of blood vessels on the skin. It cannot change the diameter of a pore. It is not a facelift and is typically not recommended for improving dark skin discoloration on darker skin types.

### New peels breathe life into market

The market for cellular rejuvenation continues to rise while breakthroughs in actual chemical varieties have been relatively stagnant. The products on the market today are modifications of the same products which have been on the market for the past decade.

However, several new products have recently been introduced which add a twist to a traditional market.

One is the Mandelac Peel. While fruit acids are commonly used in AHA peels, the Mandelac Peel, developed by SeSDerma, internationally based in Valencia, Spain, uses almond extract as its active component. One of the only companies on the market with this peel, the Mandelac Peel is quickly becoming SeSDerma's most requested product.

"This product is particularly nice in the summer, when skin tends to be oily," said Cecelia Ryle, contact for SeSDerma's United States distribution. "The Mandelac Peel does not make the patient photo-sensitive, a common side effect with other peels. The almond properties are perfect for all skin types, even Asian skin, a skin that is typically very sensitive."

exCel Cosmeceuticals Inc., of Bloomfield Hills, MI, launched its Clay Peel system earlier this year. The Clay Peel is an application of amino fruit acids (AFA's) as well as a clay mask in a two-step procedure.

"The Clay Peel seems to have extraordinary efficacy with hyperpigmentation, typically the main complaint of patients after years of sun exposure," said Dr. Joel Schlessinger, Cosmetic Dermatologist in Omaha, NE, and President of LovelySkin.com. "Conditions such as melasma seem to respond as well, and we encourage our toughest patients to use a hydroquinone product such as TriLuma for maximal benefits while undergoing the peels."

A final new product which has created a stir in the market is known as the Blue Peel. The Blue Peel was

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developed by Dr. Zein Obagi, developer of the Obagi Nu-Derm skin care products. Its unique property is a blue "dye" which is integrated in a fairly traditional TCA peel. The blue in the peel lets the practitioner

who combine procedures for enhanced results will ultimately reap the most benefits.

Dr. Schlessinger agrees. "Our practice has used peels in some shape or form for the past ten years, and it has been interesting to see the changes in trends over that time," Schlessinger said. "Although many patients still prefer the glycolic peels such as GlyDerm or MD Forte, it seems that the influx of beauty salons offering peels and the difficulties encountered with inappropriate use by these facilities has tempered the enthusiasm of the past.

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Dr. Obagi*



Before (left) and After (right)  
Obagi Blue Peel Treatment

see the exact location, depth, and saturation of the chemical, allowing the practitioner to have total control of the results.

"By being able to control the depth, I was able to use this product on all skin types," Dr. Obagi said. "I can now use this medium-depth peel on black patients, Asian

patients, all patients who before had to be concerned with pigment damage."

With these new peels, it still takes a highly skilled hand and precise movements. As with other aesthetic procedures, to produce exceptional results requires an artistic touch. The future of chemical peels will need to evolve. As patients become more savvy and want more results with less down time and discomfort, physicians

"The biggest challenge is to differentiate our services from the services down at the beauty salon. We know as dermatologists that there are significant benefits from peels and microdermabrasions when performed correctly; but we also know that they can be risky if done wrong, so it is our job to provide a product and services which capture the public's imagination while improving their appearance."

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## CHEMICAL PEEL OPTIONS

Listed below is a sample of physician-grade chemical peels listed in alphabetical order by manufacturer. Because prices vary greatly depending on the type of peel, how much is required, as well as the number of peels the patient requires to complete the procedure, we recommend you contact the product's distributor for pricing. For more information on any particular product, please contact the company's website.

**COSMEDIX**  
developed by Ben Johnson, M.D.  
800.CosMedix  
[www.cosmedix.com](http://www.cosmedix.com)

**Benefit Peel:** (Fruit Enzymes, L-Ascorbic acid 20%, Salicylic acid 1%, L-Retinol A™ 10%, PEG Shea butter, Essential oils, pH=3.0) Works on hypersensitive, Rosacea, all Fitzpatrick types, cosmetic acne, premature aging, pre/post-op.

**Purity Peel:** (Salicylic acid 4.75% from pumpkin seeds, TCA 4.25%, L-Lactic acid polymer 4.25%, L-Mandelic acid 3% from almonds, L-Retinol A™ 10%, Zinc, L-limonene, pH=2.9) Works on acne all grades, oily skin, enlarged pores, Fitzpatrick all types, hyperpigmentation.

**Timeless Peel:** (L-Retinol A™ 30% and L-Lactic acid 20%, pH=2.8) Works on Melasma, premature aging, hyper pigmentation, Fitzpatrick all types, environmental/sun damage, actinic keratosis, and large pores.

**Blueberry Jessner:** (Salicylic Acid 16%, Resorcinol 16%, L-Lactic

Acid 16%, Blueberry Extract, pH=2.7) Works on acne, scars, hyperpigmentation, premature aging, Fitzpatrick I, II, III.

**L-TCA Peel:** (L-TCA 43%, Croton oil .5%, pH=2.7) Works for Melasma, premature aging, hyperpigmentation, Fitzpatrick all types, environmental/sun damage, actinic keratosis, and large pores.

**EXCEL COSMECEUTICALS**  
developed by Dr. Marvin Klein  
800.453.5150  
[www.xlafa.com](http://www.xlafa.com)

**AFA Gels:** AFA Gels are designed to be suitable for all skin types: normal, oily and dry, and are available in 3 strengths: mild, plus, & max. exCel AFA Gels are composed of natural elements and have been clinically proven to be non-comedogenic and hypo-allergenic.

**Clay Peel:** A unique two-step formula which preps the skin with a clay mask, then follows it with an amino fruit acid based peel.

*(continued on page 11)*

# CHEMICAL PEEL OPTIONS

(continued from page 9)

## GLYDERM

Owned by ICN Pharmaceuticals

800.321.4576

[www.icnglyderm.com](http://www.icnglyderm.com)

**GlyDerm Facial Applicators:** 20-70 percent esterified, non-neutralized glycolic acid for in-office use. GlyDerm facials may be recommended for all skin types regardless of age or race. With repeated applications GlyDerm facials will improve the texture and tone of the skin and clean out pores. Also, there are many reports that the facials seem to help even out pigmentation and give the face a fresher appearance.

**GlyDerm Body Applicators:** 50 percent esterified, non-neutralized glycolic acid for in-office use.

**AccuPeel® TCA Mask:** (trichloroacetic acid, 11 percent or 16 percent) face-peeling agent. This mask can deliver the same results as liquid TCA but with less pain and stinging.

## MDFORTE

A division of Allergan, Inc.

714.246.4500

[www.mdforte.com](http://www.mdforte.com)

**Facial Cream I:** (15 percent glycolic compound) and Facial Cream II (20 percent glycolic compound). Both levels exfoliate, soften, and refine dry skin. Ideal in cold/dry climates. Facial Cream III (30 percent glycolic compound) Ideal for extremely rough, dry skin as recommended by your physician.

**Facial Lotion I:** (15 percent glycolic compound), Facial Lotion II (20 percent glycolic compound), and Facial Lotion III (30 percent glycolic compound). All three levels effectively exfoliate surface skin cells to smooth and refine skin. Lightweight, ideal alone or under makeup as well as in warm/humid climates.

**Skin Rejuvenation Lotion I:** (5 percent glycolic compound; 5 percent lactic compound) Appropriate when beginning an AHA regimen and/or for sensitive skin to improve dull, lifeless complexions. Contains vitamin A for healthier-looking skin and vitamin E, an antioxidant, to protect against future skin damage.

**Skin Rejuvenation Lotion II:** (20 percent glycolic compound) A higher strength for advanced correction, ideal for pre-laser and post-laser care (as directed by your physician), spot treatments, or smile and worry lines. Contains vitamin A and vitamin E.

**Skin Rejuvenation Lotion III:** (30 percent glycolic compound) provides the power of retinol plus the highest levels of AHA for advanced correction of extremely dry and/or environmentally damaged skin. Ideal for pre- and post-procedure application. Contains vitamin A and vitamin E.

**Glycare I:** (15 percent glycolic compound) and Glycare II (20 percent glycolic compound). These lightweight products are intended for extremely oily skin. Both strengths exfoliate surface skin cells to smooth and refine skin.

**Glycare Perfection Gel:** (5 percent glycolic compound) Contains 1 percent salicylic acid to help clear up acne blemishes and occasional breakouts while exfoliating surface skin cells.

## NEOSTRATA COMPANY INC.

609.520.0715

[www.neostrata.com](http://www.neostrata.com)

**Glycolic Acid Revitalizing Peel:** Contains 30 percent glycolic acid in exclusive amphoteric system. Can be used to improve the appearance of skin imperfections such as fine lines and wrinkles, pigmentation irregularities, and blemished skin in conjunction with a daily regimen of NeoStrata's Exuviance products. It can also be used periodically as a refreshing acid wash to exfoliate, retexturize, and revitalize the skin.

**NeoStrata High Potency Peel:** A clinical reagent used in the treatment of hyperkeratosis and used in other skin conditions including photoaging, pigmentation irregularities, and superficial scarring. This peel is designed for use on patients who have demonstrated tolerance to **NeoStrata 70 percent glycolic acid Skin Renewal Peel** and require a greater clinical effect. It contains 70 percent glycolic acid and the adjuvant peeling agents, acetic acid, pyruvic acid, and ethyl pyruvate in a vehicle which helps promote uniform penetration.



Neostrata

## OBAGI

Developed by Zein Obagi, M.D.

562.628.1007

[www.obagi.com](http://www.obagi.com)

**Obagi Blue Peel:** The Blue Peel is a light chemical peel which helps correct fine wrinkles, skin laxity, acne scarring, sun damage, pigmentation problems, and large pores. It can also be performed on the neck, chest, and hands.

## SESDERMA USA

Cecilia Ryle, Contact

404.422.7143

[www.sesderma.com](http://www.sesderma.com)

**GlicoPeel Classic/S:** (containing partially neutralized 70 percent glycolic acid, 49 percent free, 21 percent ammonium glycolate). Used for facial rejuvenation, acne and cutaneous pigmentations.

**MelasPeel J:** Based on Jessner's classical solution, but its pH is optimized (2.5). Used for Melasma, pregnancy and contraceptive pill pigmentations, sun-spots (face, arms, neckline), and dyschromia of the neck

**Salipeel:** Contains 30 percent Salicylic Acid in a hydroalcoholic solution, pH 2.9. Used for inflammatory and non-inflammatory acne, acne scarring, the treatment for skin aging, wrinkles, and dyschromia of the neck.

**RetiSes CT:** Cream: 30 percent Vitamin A, 30 percent lactic acid. Capsules: 5.5 percent Vitamin C. Known as "The Overnight Peeling." Used for the treatment for facial rejuvenation, acne, hyperpigmentations, melasma, stretch marks, and skin aging/photoaging.

**Mandelac Peel:** A new product, the Mandelac peel uses almond acids as its active ingredient. Used for oily skin, although designed for use on all skin types.



SeS DERMA