

Save Your Face

I am an over protective mother and that trait comes out even when I am dealing with full grown adults. When it comes to other people's skin I am like a mother bear protecting her young. I can't help it! "Skin Abuse" is a hot topic for me. I simply cannot sit by quietly and allow continued mistreatment of the skin. As a Cosmetic Formulator I have been asked on many occasions to formulate Alpha Hydroxy Acid Peels that use high concentrations of glycolic acid. Over and over again I have turned down the business. For many years I have had the firm belief that chemical peels and many spa facial peels are too harsh. My stance has always been that consistent and gentle use of Alpha Hydroxy Acids at home was just as effective and far less painful. Finally, a seven week study by the University of Pennsylvania has proved my point. They found that an at home facial peel containing glycolic acid at 10% was as effective as the professional peels with 20-35% glycolic acid and less irritating. Glycolic peels with higher concentrations leave the face red, raw and exposed.

In the comfort of your own home you can give yourself skin care treatments that are effective and gentle on your skin. Of course, I'd go to the spa any day of the week over a home spa treatment, but time and money can often get in the way of a trip to the spa. Even if money is not an obstacle the reality of a mom's life is that your time is not your own. But there are those few precious minutes or hours, between when the wee ones finally fall asleep and you pass out from sheer exhaustion, which can be spent in your own personal "home spa". Alpha Hydroxy Acid treatments are a safe and effective way to "resurface" your skin. The end result is a healthy glow and fresh skin.

Why Peel?

Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHA's) use glycolic, malic, citric, lactic and/or tartaric acids to improve the texture of the skin by removing the damaged outer layers. AHA treatments are used by people that want to improve the appearance of their skin, including acne, wrinkles and uneven skin pigmentation. After an AHA peel your skin may experience some flaking, scaling, redness and dryness depending on the depth of the peel. In the end your skin will have a healthier glow and improved texture and appearance. At home versions of AHA products are much milder and do not leave your skin with the negative side effects, but over time improve the appearance of your skin. Some AHA masques and peels cause tingling and mild redness, which should not cause alarm.

Other Peels - Buyer Beware

No medical degree is required to perform a chemical peel, even the strongest variety. Inadequate training can lead to dangerous results. Ask your Doctor or Esthetician what kind of training and experience they have had with peels before you allow them to resurface your skin with a strong chemical peel. Medical cosmetic treatments and spa treatments vary in strength and ingredients. Alpha Hydroxy Acids are commonly used, but at much higher concentrations than you would use at home. AHA peels at high concentrations cause stinging, redness, irritation and crusting. Trichloroacetic Acid (TCA) is used at varying concentrations, but commonly used for

medium depth peeling. TCA peels are used to smooth out fine surface wrinkles, remove superficial blemishes and correct pigment problems. TCA peels take several months for your new layers of skin to heal and cause sun sensitivity for months. Phenol is the strongest chemical solution used for deep peels. Phenol treatments are used to correct blotches, smoothing out coarse wrinkles. It is extremely strong. With a phenol peel, you have to protect your skin from the sun forever. It changes the pigment of your skin and you will not be able to tan or correct any resulting uneven pigment. Phenol peels take several months to heal from. TCA and phenol peels may cause tingling or throbbing for several days, a crust or scab will form and significant swelling may occur. But why go through all of this pain? So much pain, patients are often sent home with painkillers!

Safe at Home Spa Treatments

There are many ways you can use alpha hydroxy acids safely at home. There are many cleansers, toners, crèmes, exfoliants and masques on the market that are safe and effective for long term use. The pH of your peel should never be below a 3 and many on the market are too low. Your skin can “stingle” from a peel, but it should not burn excessively. Use products that use Glycolic Acid, Lactic Acid, Malic Acid, Tartaric Acid and Citric Acid with great care. Be certain that you always use a sunscreen after use of any Alpha Hydroxy Acid products. A product does not have to burn your face in order to be effective and useful. Imagine if you scrubbed an apple with an S.O.S. pad vs. a sponge. Both ways you would clean off pesticides and dirt, but the apple would not be as appealing to eat once you scrubbed it with an S.O.S. pad.

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