



## WRITING SAMPLE

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### 5 Things to Know about a Chemical Peel

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Chemical peels are a popular treatment used to improve the appearance of the skin. While usually chemical peels are applied to the face, they can also be used on the hands or neck. These treatments involve the application of an acid solution to the skin, which dissolves skin cells and removes the top layers of the epidermis.

The body responds by generating a new layer of skin that is younger-looking and free of the conditions the patient was seeking to remedy.

If you are considering this treatment, here are five things you should know.

#### **What chemical peels treat**

People who have acne scars or other facial scars might be interested in having a chemical peel treatment to reduce the appearance of these scars. Other cosmetic issues addressed by chemical peels include hyperpigmentation such as melasma or age spots, sun-damaged skin, fine lines and wrinkles including crow's feet and sagging skin.

#### **Chemical peels aren't just for beauty**

In addition to being used to cosmetically to improve the appearance of facial skin, chemical peels are sometimes recommended as a medical treatment, too.

People who have spent a great deal of time in the sun, and are prone to precancerous lesions on their skin, might be good candidates for chemical peels as a way to prevent the precancer from becoming more serious. These precancerous lesions — actinic keratosis — are patches of rough, scaly skin that can be a shade or two darker than one's normal skin tone. These areas of precancer do not always lead to cancer, but between 6% and 10% will spread into the dermis layer of skin and become squamous cell carcinoma.

For patients who have patches of actinic keratosis, physicians might recommend a chemical peel to destroy the "bad" cells, and reduce the likelihood of cancer development.

## **Three types of peels**

Generally, chemical peels are grouped into three types.

The light peel is sometimes called the “lunchtime peel” because you can have the procedure over your lunch break and return to work with no noticeable effects. This treatment offers subtle improvements that show additional progress with subsequent treatments. The light, or micro, peel is done using milder chemicals such as alpha hydroxy acids and beta hydroxy acids, such as glycolic acid.

A medium chemical peel is often used to treat acne scars, uneven skin pigmentation and deeper wrinkles. This treatment usually results in skin that is noticeably smoother and fresher looking. Health professionals will often use trichloroacetic or salicylic acid for this type of treatment, which removes skin cells from both the epidermis and the dermis.

Deep chemical peels offer dramatic results, treating deeper wrinkles, sun-damaged skin, blotchy skin, and scars. This type of treatment may require a local anesthetic and a sedative to manage discomfort. Stronger chemicals — phenol, trichloroacetic acid and croton oil — penetrate to the lower dermal layer of your skin. Some medical experts recommend you have a deep chemical peel only once in your lifetime. Its effects can last as many as 10 years.

Many physicians use blends of ingredients for each of their treatments, so you might want to inquire as to specifically what your caregiver uses.

## **Before the procedure**

Before you undergo a chemical peel, a medical professional should thoroughly examine your skin and your medical history.

He or she may tell you that these treatments are generally not recommended for people with infections, sunburns, cuts or broken skin, or any active skin disease such as psoriasis, eczema, dermatitis or rosacea.

Your doctor may also ask you to postpone a chemical peel if you’re pregnant or nursing or have taken Accutane in the past six months. You may also be asked to not use particular skincare products, particularly those that contain acid, for 48 hours prior to your treatment.

If you have a history of cold sores, your doctor may prescribe you an antiviral medication to take before the procedure.

## **What to expect after a chemical peel**

Your recovery time after a chemical peel varies based on the type of peel you’ve had.

After a light peel, you’ll experience some mild redness, light flaking and irritation for a few days. A medium peel will result in similar symptoms, but the peeling, swelling and redness will last a few more days, up to a week.

A deep peel requires as long as two weeks or more of recovery time. Your skin may blister. It will be quite red and swollen, and may remain red for up to three months. You may experience burning or throbbing sensations. You will be given specific instructions for caring for your skin, including how to wash your face and which products to use. You will want to avoid being in the sun while your skin recovers.