

CHEMOSURGERY (Chemical Peel)

The purpose of chemosurgery is to clean up the face by the application of a chemical caustic applied to the skin. The process helps to reduce or remove freckles and some pigmentation thereby improving the complexion. It also reduces or eliminates superficial and some deep lines and tightens the skin giving the face a more youthful and fresh appearance.

The face is first thoroughly cleansed and the chemical is applied with a cotton-tipped applicator. The solution feels very warm to hot as it is applied. The skin turns completely white and it is then neutralized by the application of cool compresses.

The face will swell shortly after the solution has been applied and the face will turn a dark brown color. Streaks of white may show amidst the dark brown. This is normal and the patient should not be concerned. Thus, freckles and pigmentations will seem larger than before due to the swelling.

You can expect a considerable amount of swelling and discomfort, particularly around the eyes. You may apply ice or cold compresses when you get home to relieve the discomfort. The peeling usually begins after 2 days and is usually finished by the end of the first week. We will prescribe pain medication as well as a sleep medication.

Under no circumstances should the patient peel off the dead skin. To do so will cause recurrence of pain and possible bleeding areas. If the skin is curling off, the dead skin can be cut off with a scissors. It should never be stripped off the skin. As the skin begins to peel, the face, in the healing phase, will begin to itch. If the itching is severe, medication will be prescribed to alleviate it.

The patient must not expose herself to sun for at least six weeks following the facial peeling. To do so incurs the risk of pigmentation of the face.

There are no dietary restrictions with this treatment; however, as the swelling may make it difficult to open the mouth, the first day or two the initial diet may consist of liquids only. Restrict talking and mouth movements so as not to disrupt the crust. During the entire time of the process (5-7 days), activity should be restricted. No exercise or undue physical motions or activities.

Occasionally, the face will have blotchy appearance following the peel. This generally fades with time. A prescribed ointment will hasten its departure.