

# Achieve a 'Glow'

by Mary Jo Blackwood, R.N., MPH

Summer is over and we're left with dry, sun-damaged skin that won't do at all if we're to look our best for festive holiday occasions. But we're busy. Fortunately chemical peels and microdermabrasion will give a new facial glow without any significant time investment, says Dr. Mike Nayak of Nayak Plastic Surgery.

"They both help resurface the skin and remove that old outer layer," he explains. But Nayak cautions us to be realistic about what we want to accomplish in this period of time.

"Generally speaking, the more things we want to fix about our skin, the deeper the treatment and more downtime. If you want to change sallow dullness, even out pigment somewhat, and make fine wrinkles a little less noticeable, peels and microdermabrasion will both work," he promises.

Nayak likens microdermabrasion to an aggressive apricot scrub. It's refreshing and painless. Light chemical peels will do the same thing, he says. The skin looks better after one treatment and a lot better after a series, he notes, recommending a weekly

light peel for six weeks to see really noticeable changes without downtime.

"The next level, a medium-depth peel, targets brown spots and fine wrinkles in the epithelial layer," Nayak explains. "If you have a medium TCA peel now, in two weeks you will look great for Christmas. Another option is laser resurfacing. Technology has improved so much that with multiple light laser treatments, the patient gets the benefit of deeper treatments without the drawbacks. The body has a healing process that is turned on by a controlled injury as the heat gets to the deep dermis without removing the surface of the skin, but it takes four or five treatments to see the effect."

Dr. Herluf Lund of Enhance Medical Spa says patients generally like to start with the easiest options. "They can come in during the day and have a fruit acid peel, like pumpkin, and have a new glow for their evening parties," he recommends. "Fruit acids give a very nice, light peel and a pleasant fragrance to make it an enjoyable experience."

If a patient needs only a freshening of the complexion, light peels work great, but if she has a laundry list of goals, Lund says a light peel won't do it. "If some-



one is serious about using a peel to improve complexion, we can do a three-layer peel, which involves applying three different acids in layers and then sending the patient home wearing the peel," Lund says.

In this event, the face will be red as the peel works its benefit over several days. Starting the second day and lasting for about three days, the skin flakes. After that, the patient returns to the office for a microdermabrasion treatment to get rid of the rest of the flakes, and the peeling process is complete.

"We generally do microdermabrasion before applying the peel," Lund says. "If we look at a baby's skin under a microscope, all the cells are even and lined up. If we look at skin with 50 years of sun exposure, it looks more like craters and dips. By using microdermabrasion first,

we can start off with more even skin for the peel to treat."

Lund says microdermabrasion is a good first step for many other office procedures or as a stand-alone to brighten the skin. Today's equipment is much nicer for the patient than earlier versions that used crystals for the abrasion, which went flying everywhere.

"Our equipment is now crystal-free,"

Lund notes. "No particles to breathe or clean off. We use an abrasive head. Microdermabrasion should not be confused with dermabrasion, which is a much more serious procedure and should be done only by a surgeon."

Valerie Moll, an aesthetician with The Lifestyle Center, says microdermabrasion is a great tool but too harsh for someone with skin conditions like rosacea. "It does get rid of the top layer of skin, and with successive treatments it can prevent dirt and oil

build-up and help unclog blackheads," she notes. "Its main advantage over peels is that it's quicker and allows smooth exfoliation."

Moll says peels are good for everyone, even those with rosacea. Glycolic peels keep working beyond the peel time itself, because they stimulate the skin to increase cell turnover. A medium glycolic acid peel is probably the deepest she recommends before the holidays because the resulting redness or flakiness might be difficult to cover up.

She says that a weekly light glycolic acid peel will be red that day and a little flaky a couple of days later, but moisturizing should take care of it. "If you get peels done regularly, they can help prevent fine lines and wrinkles, especially if you start them fairly young and use sun block religiously," Moll advises. "The skin is more sensitive to sun when it's undergoing peels or microdermabrasion, but being in the sun can undo the progress." Her advice: "Prevention is easier than trying to turn back time."

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