

Chemical peel

Patient information

Time off

People generally look worse than they feel after a chemical peel but you could frighten those of a nervous disposition for the next week or so, so either take time off work or be brave and tell everyone what you are doing.

Looking after yourself

- Use ice packs to minimise any stinging or burning sensation for the first 48 hours.
- Petroleum jelly may initially be applied as a dressing – you may be told to apply it several times a day for some days, to prevent cracking.
- You may be given an antibiotic ointment to apply twice a day for the first four days
- Do not wash your face and avoid getting soap onto it.
- Keep your skin well moisturised with the cream or ointment recommended by Mr Malhotra.
- There may be yellow seepage from day four after the peel – this should be soaked off using cotton wool a white vinegar solution made of half a tablespoon of white vinegar in a cup of cooled, boiled water.
- Your skin will peel patchily, just like a sunburn, until it has all been shed, exposing bright pinkish-red skin underneath.
- Do not pull off peeling skin, no matter how tempting it is – you could cause scarring.
- Use a dry cotton bud to rub off crusts and sloughing skin – you can start this two to four days after the procedure but be gentle.
- If you get a cold sore, apply acyclovir ointment as soon as possible – you may wish to contact your GP.

When you have recovered

- Your skin will take three to four weeks to heal and will look paler and tighter.
- You must use high factor sun protection every day for at least three months, or you could suffer uneven pigmentation and further sun damage.
- A peel can be repeated safely after three months but this is not usually necessary.