FAQs

What is exfoliation?

Generally speaking, exfoliation refers to any technique that removes cells from the skin's surface, not only immediately "refreshing" the skin's appearance but also stimulating cell renewal. The benefits can be dramatic, and when used with professional guidance, exfoliation can treat a variety of skin problems - including acne, hyperpigmentation, premature aging and scarring.

There are two main types of exfoliants:

- Physical - scrubs, masks and microdermabrasion. They remove debris through gentle friction or abrasion resulting in "polishing" the skin's surface, and
- Chemical - alpha and beta hydroxy's (glycolic and salicylic, respectively) and enzymes (from pumpkin, papaya and pineapple). Chemical exfoliants help digest dead skin cells, resulting in smoother skin.

What are hydroxy's and how do they aid exfoliation?

Unlike physical exfoliants, hydroxy acid-based exfoliants smooth the skin by dissolving the intercellular "glue" that attaches the cells to the skin surface. Hydroxy acids (especially glycolic) are the most common form of at-home exfoliant because they are extremely effective and, when used properly, very safe.

Glycolic acid was the first hydroxy to be used in cosmetic products and is still widely-used. Face To Face Esthetics carries and uses some glycolic products with the percentage of active ingredients varying from 5% to 20%, and in different formulations (serums, gels, lotions and creams). For the few people who cannot tolerate hydroxy's, enzymes deliver the same results.

What skin types need exfoliation and what are the benefits?

The skin exfoliates naturally. At any given moment, your skin is shedding at the rate of about a million cells every minute! An exfoliation regimen simply helps your body with this process, which becomes especially vital as we age.

Teens completely regenerate their external layer of skin, on average about every 14 days. By age 40, this rate has increased to 30-40 days. The result can be dull, ashy or mottled-looking skin. An exfoliation regimen reduces the time that dulling skin cells sit at the surface of our skin for a healthier, more vibrant complexion.

Do stronger exfoliation products provide better results?

Many people get a little exfoliation-crazy under the mistaken notion that if a little is good, a lot has to be great! Most normal skin benefits from low percentage hydroxy's (4%-6%); thicker, oily, "orange

peel" skin can benefit from higher percentages (10%-15%). At Face To Face Esthetics, higher concentration glycolic products (15%-20%) are available but are recommended for use on the body, such as soles of the feet and elbows.

While every skin condition is different and reacts to exfoliation differently, you should discontinue your exfoliation regimen if your skin feels chapped, irritated or is unusually red for a prolonged period of time. At this point, you're not removing dead skin debris - you're scrubbing away the protective epidermal layer, which can result in permanent sensitization, premature aging and a host of other concerns.

Is there any connection between diet and my skin?

Yes, paramount to having a healthy body with a good complexion is a well balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals with plenty of water. Not eating properly, smoking, alcohol, drugs, excessive sugar and caffeine are enough to aggravate even the most mild skin problems. It has been demonstrated that sugar in the system triggers acne-prone skin to be problematic.

What is the significance of antioxidants in skin care products?

Antioxidants are chemicals that protect cells by neutralizing free radicals that are the result of external forces, such as sun damage, pollution, wind, and temperature; and internal factors such as metabolism and its associated waste products.

Common antioxidants are vitamins A, C, E, superoxide dismutase, green tea extract and beta carotene. These special chemicals assist in skin repair and the strengthening of blood vessels.

What are free radicals?

Some forces that cause free radicals are air pollution, sunlight, alcohol and cigarette smoke. Another factor is stress which produces adrenaline-related products, which not only restrict blood flow to our skin, but also generates potent, destructive free radicals.

Free radicals start a chain reaction under the skin's surface. In simple terms, the process of destruction is outlined: antioxidants have an unpaired electron in their outer orbit, making the molecule unstable. Free radicals attempt to gain an electron from natural proteins in the skin to acquire stability. This sets off a chain reaction because all molecules want to form an octet, which is an atom with eight valence electrons. In the aftermath of the reaction are free radical waste products of misshapen and broken molecules. The structure of our skin is damaged and its cellular structure is weakened. Free radicals can also alter our DNA, which results in aging and illness.

Are sun blocks always needed?

Absolutely! Anytime you go outside or work under fluorescent lighting, you need a sun block to protect against UVA & UVB light rays. When you are driving in the car, the glass can intensify these rays even more.

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends at least 15 SPF for daily use. The following was taken directly from the AAD website - www.aad.org/

> *"You should use an SPF 15 sunscreen every day, since that number would block most of the sun's rays. If you'll be out in the sun for more than an hour, though, use an SPF 30. If you'll be sweating a lot, you may want to use an SPF 30 on your face no matter what, because the sweat will thin it down to an SPF 15 fast!"*

How do sunscreens work?

There are two basic types of sun protection: sunscreen (chemical) and sun block (physical). A product labeled “sunscreen” contains chemical agents such as octylmethoxycinnamate, avobenzone, and oxybenzone which protect your skin by absorbing UV rays (but these ingredients are not necessarily good for you). Products labeled “sun block” contain ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide and reflect the UV rays away from your skin.

What does “SPF” mean?

Sun Protection Factor, or SPF, is an indication of the amount of protection from UVB rays. It does not address protection from UVA rays. The SPF value on a sunscreen product indicates how much longer you are able to stay out in the sun before getting a sunburn when protected by the sunscreen.

For example, if your "natural burning time" is 5 minutes in the sun, a properly applied SPF 30 sunscreen will protect you from burning 30-times longer, or about 150 minutes. The higher the SPF number, the longer your skin is protected before it begins to burn.

I don't like the feel of sunscreens, is there anything else I can use?

Yes! I can’t tell you how many clients have told me that they do not like to wear sunscreens because they tend to be greasy or heavy. Naturally occurring mineral products provide SPF. Try using a mineral powder foundation with SPF, which will provide a sun block.

What is the difference between UVA and UVB rays?

UVA and UVB rays are different wavelengths of ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun. Both types are invisible and can cause skin cancer.

UVA rays are the most plentiful. They penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin and can cause invisible photo damage, which may appear a few years later as lines, wrinkles or dark spots. UVA rays are not only responsible for aging effects; they can also contribute to sunburn and skin cancer.

UVB rays are the primary cause for the redness and blistering of sunburns. Sun exposure can cause melanoma, one of the most dangerous types of skin cancer.

What exactly is a suntan?

A suntan is caused by an increase in melanin, the pigment in your skin. Melanin gives skin its natural color. The more melanin - the darker the skin's color. When UV rays contact the skin, a special type of skin cell makes and releases more melanin. This is a defensive response, as melanin can partially protect the skin from some of the harmful effects of the sun.

But remember: there's no such thing as a safe tan! A tan is a sign that some cells in your skin have already been injured by the sun. It's your skin's attempt to prevent further damage.

What's the difference between “waterproof,” “very water resistant” and “water resistant?”

To be labeled "waterproof" or "very water resistant," a sunscreen must maintain the same SPF level for 80 minutes in water or after perspiring. Because of FDA rules, soon the word "waterproof" will be disappearing from package labels and will probably be replaced by the term "very water resistant." The words "water resistant" on a label mean that the sunscreen maintains the same SPF level for 40 minutes in water or after perspiring.

I know I need a high SPF sunscreen, but what else should I look for?

Look for broad spectrum protection. This means that the product blocks both UVA and UVB rays. An important plus is antioxidants in the form of vitamins A, C & E. Antioxidants help prevent free radical damage to the skin caused by sunlight. They also help shield against long-term environmental damage.

When should I apply sunscreen and how much should I use?

Many people get poor sun protection simply because they don't apply enough sunscreen. The average adult should apply approximately one ounce (about the size of a shot glass) to cover the whole body. If necessary, give the sunscreen a few minutes to be absorbed before going outside. Sunscreens must be reapplied every few hours and especially after swimming or perspiring.

It is recommended that sunscreen be applied first thing in the morning as part of your daily skin care routine. Apply liberally and evenly to all exposed skin. Keep in mind that certain medications and/or esthetic treatments may increase you skin's sensitivity to the sun. Don't forget lip, ears, feet and hands.