



PREPARING FOR THE *Wedding*

TEXT BY PHILLIP R. LANGSDON, MD, FACS

A wedding—the best and most exciting reason for families and friends to come together. When one of our own is going down the aisle we approach the occasion with great anticipation, not only for the happy couple but also for the opportunity to enjoy the company of friends and family. We envision the perfect ceremony, the rehearsal dinner and the reception. Colorful flowers, beautiful attire, wonderful celebration. Of course, this all requires lots of planning... and many planners put significant thought not only into the wedding process but also into personal dress and appearance!

I've treated many patients over the years who were preparing for a wedding, either their own or a child's. As a surgeon who provides both facial aesthetic surgery and full-service non-surgical treatments like Botox®, injectable fillers, laser and chemical peels, I've helped many tune up their appearance for the big day. Recently, I went through the wedding experience myself as our oldest daughter took the trip down the aisle. As my own family undertook the planning process with the church, reception site, music and flowers I saw firsthand the impact of the personal preparation. My wife was looking for the perfect dress to wear as well as spending time in front of the magnifying mirror in our bathroom, asking for a little injection, a tiny bit of filler, and as the time neared came the question, "Do you think it is too late for a chemical peel?"

I have always heard what others were going through when it came to weddings, but

experiencing one in my own family made it even more personal. So, I'd like to share some general guidelines regarding the quest for personal preparation one goes through in an attempt to look one's best for the big day!

Patients request a whole host of treatments. Usually, a young bride won't need any, but in the instance that something might be needed, perhaps it is only a light peel or microdermabrasion to freshen the skin, a tiny bit of filler in the smile lines or some Botox® for the vertical lines between the brows.

Brides or mothers in their 40s, 50s, and on may request eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty) for heavy eyelids, or a face lift or mini face lift (rhytidectomy) for sagging cheeks or neck. The most important thing, no matter the treatment, is to start early. It is never a good idea to wait until just before the big event. I'll never forget the mother who wanted a face lift two weeks before her daughter's wedding; I declined to do the procedure that close to the date. Four to six months prior would have been better.

Even facial injections can cause some swelling and bruising, so I would recommend at least four to six weeks ahead of the big event for a dose of Botox® or facial filler, just to be safe. Some people don't bruise at all, but if you do it may take a while for the discoloration to subside and it is different in everyone.

Facial peels can help smooth and tighten the skin, but again, it is important to allow enough

time for the pinkness to go away. The length of time will be different depending on the type of peel. Superficial glycolic peels may take two weeks. Mid-level TCA peels might be ready in two or three weeks, but if a patient hasn't had a TCA peel before, I recommend a month—extra sensitive skin can sometimes remain red a while longer than most. Peels designed for deep wrinkles should be done at least four to six months ahead of the wedding to ensure things have settled down.

Some laser treatments can also cause bruising, redness and crusting. Depending on the type and intensity of the laser treatment, most patients need to do these one to six months before a wedding.

The most important thing is to talk to your doctor early so you can plan ahead of time. Having just gone through our family's first wedding process I can now say with EXPERIENCE...there is just too much to plan and too much to do when putting on a wedding; you do not need the added stress of worrying about last-minute treatments. Plan ahead to look your best! ■

Phillip R. Langsdon, MD, FACS

Chief of Facial Plastic Surgery, UT; Southern Regional Director-Elect of the American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery; and director of The Langsdon Clinic
www.drlangsdon.com