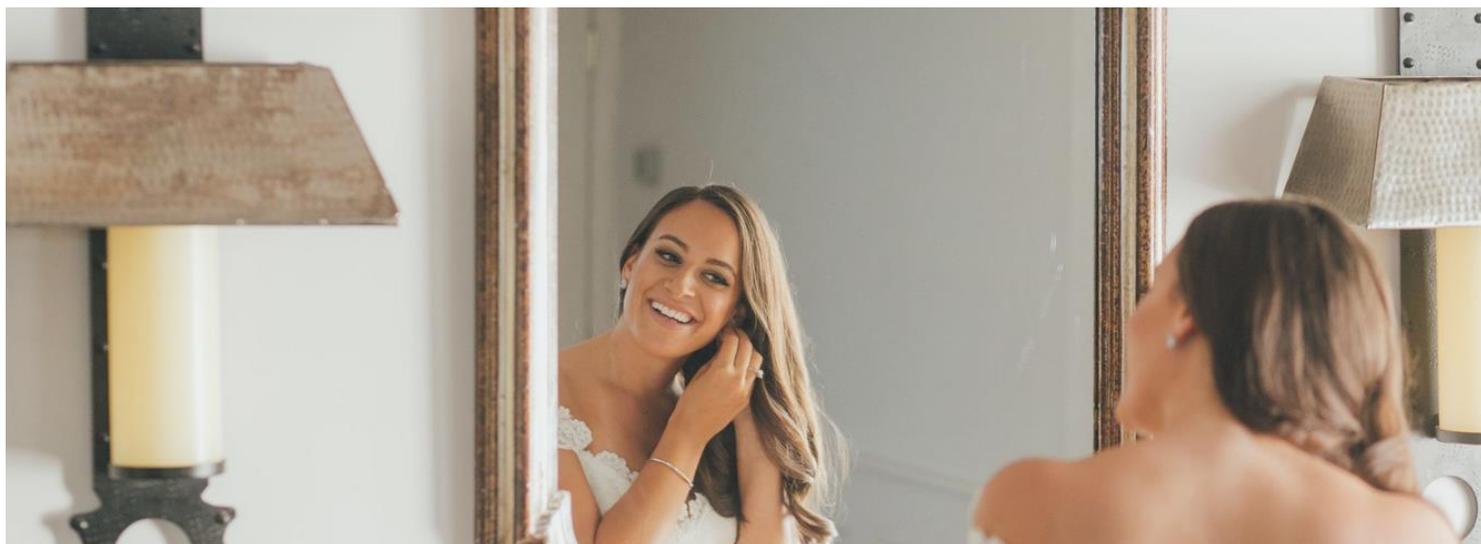


HAIRSTYLES & MAKEUP

Which Pre-Wedding Beauty Treatments Are Right for You?



Written by Janell Hickman • Photo: Olli Studio

Naturally, you want to look your best on your wedding day. But in order to get that coveted bridal glow, you might be considering one (or a few) treatments—some of which you might be trying for the first time. Before you pull the trigger, we've compiled a quick guide (with expert input of course) to help you decide what to say "I do" (or "I don't") to.

Learn a few of the pros (and cons) of the most popular pre-wedding beauty and hair treatments.

Keratin Treatments

For those getting married in hot or humid locations, a keratin treatment can seem like a godsend. Not only can they help straighten hair but help eliminate dreaded frizz. The drawback? Keratin frequently reduces overall body. "Most brides I see want more volume in their hair on their wedding day," explains Paul Labrecque, owner and stylist at his namesake salon in New York City. "This isn't something I typically recommend to brides specifically in advance of the wedding date, but if you struggle with the above and want to wear your hair down and straight for you wedding day, get this done!"

Like any chemical treatment, you want to make sure you see a skilled professional. Now isn't the time to DIY or opt for the cheapest stylist. "Make sure your stylist is able to differentiate and choose the right keratin formula for you by analyzing your strands (i.e. do you have virgin hair, has it been colored or bleached, what's the damage level, etc.)," shares Labrecque. "It is also extremely important to have that person pick the proper heat setting because your hair could get burned."

Chemical Peels

Think beyond your face—peels are also a great option for the neck, décolletage, arms and legs. “I recommend our patients test drive the chemical peel out six to eight weeks before their wedding day and then do another one two weeks out,” explains plastic surgeon David M. Shafer of Shafer Plastic Surgery. “On average, our patients have no downtime from work and minimal social downtime, if any. Within days skin is smoother, softer and tighter. Stronger chemical peels can dramatically reduce the amount of sun damage and fine lines and wrinkles. I recommend Oxygenetix to our patients since it has calming aloe vera and peptides which decrease downtime and improve healing times.”

Products that are a 'no-no' after a peel are anything that includes alpha hydroxy acids, beta hydroxy acids, or retin-a (tretinoin.) “These ‘active ingredients’ are excellent a week or two before or after but are too harsh for the sensitive, healing skin during the peel process,” he explains. He also suggests avoiding harsh exfoliants are also contra-indicated after a peel, such as scrubs that include abrasive ingredients such as crushed walnuts, crushed seeds, sea salt or even buff puffs. “Using gentle cleansers and products is the best way to have great results. Plus, use your sunscreen liberally!”



Teeth Whitening + Veneers

We all want a sparkling photo to show-off in our photos for years to come. “Teeth whitening is one of the most requested cosmetic dental treatments especially before a wedding,” explains dentist Dr. Steven Davidowitz. “I highly suggest not waiting until the last minute to decide to whiten your teeth before your big day! Some whitening treatments can take at least one to two weeks, depending on your desired results, so it is important to leave yourself enough time.”

Dr. Davidowitz notes that some whitening procedures can cause mild gum tissue irritation, sensitive teeth and dried spotty teeth can occur for the first few days. “First thing first, a few months before the wedding schedule a cleaning and checkup with your dentist to figure out the whitening option that is best for you, he advises.”

Those looking to make a bigger (and more permanent change) might consider veneers. “Depending on what you want to do to with your teeth, it’s important to get the process started early, so you do not find yourself scrambling right before the wedding,” cautions Dr. Davidowitz. Veneers can take two to three months from start to completion. “Natural looking teeth will have different shades and translucencies in each tooth. While, fake looking veneers tend to be very monochromatic with one solid shade throughout each tooth,” he further explains.

Hair Color and Highlights

Itching to make a big color change for your wedding-day hair? Ditch a last-minute decision and plan at least three months in advance—especially for anything drastic. “[This way] you’ll have plenty of time to make adjustments or to go back to your original color if you change your mind,” says Labrecque. However, if you’ve consistently gotten highlights, the later you wait the better. “All color should absolutely be done the week prior to your big day for the perfect amount of roots showing or not showing,” says Labrecque.

Laser Hair Removal

Wave your hands in the air like you don’t care—and ensure you don’t have to worry about pesky underarm hair. “We usually suggest at least six to nine months prior to the wedding, as you may need at least four sessions on areas such as bikini, underarms and legs to get noticeable permanent hair reduction,” explains Christian Karavolas, owner of Romeo & Juliette Laser Hair Removal Spa.

“We do not suggest getting laser hair removal too close to the wedding date, as there could be irritation that may take a little time to heal,” shares Karavolas. “We suggest at least two weeks prior to the wedding date to get the final treatment.” Before undergoing your service, opt for a brief, initial consultation to ask any questions and have your technician advice on treatment options. According to Karavolas on sessions for a full bikini takes approximately 20 minutes, underarms five to ten minutes, and full legs roughly 30 to 40 minutes.



Gel Manicures (and Pedicures)

Frequent gel and acrylic manicures will absolutely compromise the health of your natural nail. “If you intend on wearing yours natural on your wedding day I highly recommend skipping the gels and acrylics the few months prior to the big day for maximum nail health,” explains manicurist Stephanie Stone who works with Demi Lovato, Miley Cyrus, and Shay Mitchell.

While we’re on the topic, when it comes to smooth, honeymoon-ready feet it’s all about at-home maintenance. Stone recommends keeping up with your regular pedicure schedule, but being super generous with hydrations. “After your shower, a trick I love is to moisturize your feet with cocoa butter lotion and then put fuzzy socks on over the lotion instead of rubbing it all the way in,” she shares. “The lotion will soak into your feet keeping your regular rough spots like the heels feeling soft and smooth.”

Botox

Looking for a quick refresh with minimal downtime? Injectables have become a popular choice for brides (and mother-in-laws) before the aisle. After your Botox injections, the results will be seen within three to five days and last about three to five months. In terms of frequency, most patients repeat their Botox injections every three to four months. “If a patient is getting married and has never had Botox, I generally recommend having a treatment about five months prior to the wedding so they can see how they like the treatments and then doing their next treatment about a month before the wedding,” explains Dr. Shafer.

“The most common but very rare side effects are swelling (lasting about 20 minutes) and low chance of bruising—less than 3% of people get a bruise after Botox. Some other uncommon side-effects include drooping of the eyebrows if the patient had pre-existing brow ptosis (drooping) combined with too much Botox in the forehead.”