

## Guidelines for Topical PUVA

Ultraviolet light reduces inflammation of the skin and can help in various inflammatory skin disorders.

**PUVA (Psoralen + UVA)**, also sometimes called photochemotherapy, in which UVA radiation is combined with a sensitizer (a chemical that increases the effect of UVA on the skin) called a psoralen.

Topical PUVA treatment involves making your skin extra sensitive to UVA by means of a psoralen mixed with water, and the affected area/s soaked for 15 minutes. UVA treatment will be given once every 5 days (Monday - Friday-Wed) with a minimum of 72 hours interval between treatments.

### What reasons might prevent you having Topical PUVA

- If you are unable to attend regularly for treatment.
- If your skin condition is made worse by natural sunlight.
- If you have xeroderma pigmentosum or lupus erythematosus.
- If you have had skin cancer.
- If you are taking a medicine which suppresses your immune system, such as ciclosporin or methotrexate.
- If you are taking medicines that make you more sensitive to sunlight.
- If you have reached the maximum number of light treatments in a lifetime of 150
- If you are pregnant

### Do I need to avoid anything whilst having Topical PUVA?

- Medicines that make you more sensitive to ultraviolet light. You should inform the phototherapy staff of any new medicines prescribed or purchased, including herbal preparations.
- Additional sun exposure or the use of sunbeds.
- Excessive quantities of foods such as celery, carrots, figs, citrus fruits, parsnips and parsley; these can make you more sensitive to ultraviolet light.
- Perfumed products.
- Creams, ointments and lotions other than moisturisers, unless directed by the phototherapy staff.

### What are the potential side effects of phototherapy?

#### The short-term side effects of phototherapy include:

- Redness and discomfort (sunburn).
- Dry and itchy skin.
- Folliculitis - inflammation of the hair roots may occur. This does not cause discomfort and usually require no treatment or interruption of the UV therapy.
- A sunlight-induced rash called polymorphic light eruption may develop whilst receiving ultraviolet light.
- Blisters in areas of psoriasis.
- Worsening of skin disease.

## Potential long-term side effects of phototherapy include:

- Premature skin ageing.
- Skin cancer (the risk of skin cancer is related to your total lifetime exposure to ultraviolet light, and other factors such as how easily you burn in the sun; the risk is higher with repeated courses of PUVA).

## Other Important Information

### What happens during treatment:

- After you have soaked your hands/feet you will place them on a UVA light canopy for treatment.
- Whilst having treatment you will need to wear UV opaque goggles and a clear visor and any other barrier needed to shield unaffected skin.
- Pregnancy should be avoided during PUVA treatment.
- You should not expose any part of yourself to strong sunlight after treatment as your skin has been sensitised to ultra violet light and you may get burned. You should apply sunscreen on exposed sites for 24 hours after PUVA treatment.

- Protect yourself from sunlight by wearing appropriate clothing.
- Always consult the Dermatology Department before starting on any new tablets or creams during a course of PUVA therapy.
- Please inform nursing staff of any problems, such as soreness, redness, itching or burning at each visit as soon as possible if you are worried or uncertain. It may be necessary to reduce the amount of treatment or miss treatments. PUVA will not be given if the skin is too red at the next appointment.
- If you fail to attend your appointment for Topical PUVA without contacting the department this may affect your course of treatment.

### Dermatology Department

**01392 405518**

**If you are unable to attend for treatment you, a friend or relative must phone to let the Dermatology Department know.**

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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