

Photodynamic Therapy

Post-Care Advice



Nurses: _____

Date: _____

What should I do following treatment?

You should continue with normal daily activities following treatment. Keep the area dry then remove dressing in 24–48 hours. Wash the treated area 1-2 times daily and apply a moisturiser or Vaseline. The skin will heal better if kept slight moist. Any crusting should be removed by gentle washing of the skin with warm water. It is also advisable to wear a sunblock (SpF Factor 30 or higher) for several weeks following treatment. Longer-term use of a sunblock is advisable.

What should I expect after treatment?

Most patients will experience some redness, swelling and mild discomfort following treatment. This is due to inflammation of the bottom layer of the skin called the basal layer. Any abnormal cells in this layer are selectively destroyed by the treatment and this reaction lasts 5-10 days before it resolves. The skin may then be red for a few weeks (typically no longer than 8-weeks). This inflammation is a sign that the treatment has been effective in treating the abnormal skin cells. The skin reaction typically settles within 9-10 days and healing rapidly occurs after this time.

What do I do if the skin becomes very red or swollen?

Transient redness and mild swelling are normal reactions. Occasionally, a more severe reaction can occur. This will produce intense redness, crusting and scabbing of the skin surface. This reaction will always settle within 9-10 days and the skin will return to normal. It can be helped by regular washing of the skin surface, Vaseline 2-3 times daily and a topical steroid cream. This can be supplied by the treating doctor or purchased from a chemist (Eumovate cream). It is applied twice daily for 1-week.

What should I do for pain relief?

The inflammation in the skin will cause some mild discomfort that lasts from a few hours to 1-2 days. This can be relieved by regular Paracetamol. Rarely, a more severe burning sensation is experienced in the skin due to inflammation of the superficial nerves in the skin surface. This can be helped by Paracetamol and Ibuprofen tablets combined. Both can be purchased from the chemist.

What should I do about exposure to light after treatment?

The chemical reaction between the cream and the light is switched-off completely by the light treatment that you receive. This process does not continue outside of the clinic environment. However, the inflammation may become more intense in the few days following treatment as the body clears any abnormal cells and reacts to the treatment. The skin will look worse than before treatment for several days. For a few weeks following treatment, your skin may be more sensitive to light and it is advisable to wear a daily sunblock (SpF Factor 30 or higher) and to protect the area. This may include wearing a hat if a large area of scalp is treated.

What to do if you are worried?

Please contact us using the telephone number below if you experience any untoward problems or have any concerns about your Photodynamic therapy treatment.