

## Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) Treatment Guidelines

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a safe, non-invasive procedure to treat pre-cancerous lesions such as Actinic Keratosis, with the added cosmetic benefit of reducing brown spots and smoothing skin texture.

**Cold Sores:** If you have a history of cold sores, ask us about pre-care instructions.

1. **\*\*Stay completely out of direct sunlight for 24-36 hours.\*\*** That means no driving, walking, or being outside for even a few minutes at a time. Be sure to use a good sunblock in case the sun reaches your skin for even a moment.
2. Keep the treated area clean so there is not risk for infection
3. Apply moisturizer as often as needed
4. Take Advil if necessary
5. Spray on Avene Thermal Spring Water (or any water out of a spray bottle) if desired
6. Use ice packs if necessary to keep down the swelling and to reduce pain
7. Apply hydrocortisone or Aquaphor 2 times per day as needed
8. If blisters form use an antibiotic ointment such as Bacitracin or Polysporin twice per day
9. If the treated area is stinging: soak the area with 1 tablespoon white vinegar in 1 cup of cold water for 20 minutes 4-6 times a day.
10. You may begin applying makeup as soon as you feel comfortable and once any crusting has peeled

### What can I expect post-treatment?

- A sunburn-like effect is normal and can last for up to 5-7 days. This can mean anything from being light pink to a swollen, red, and itchy sunburn.
- Peeling may begin on day 3 or 4, make sure you do not pick!
- Crusting may occur where there was sun damage and/or Actinic Keratoses

### After Treatment Skin Care

- **Avoid Excessive Heat:** For 2 days post-treatment, avoid partaking in activities that will heat up your skin, such as going in a hot tub/jacuzzi/sauna, or strenuous exercise.
- **Skin Care Products:** All of your skin care products should be non-irritating and non-clogging until your skin is no longer peeling or flaking. Please do not use any scrubs, toners, glycolic acid, retinoids (RetinA or retinol), or bleaching creams (hydroquinoin) until your skin has healed.
- **Sunscreen:** Proper and frequent application of sunscreen is very important. The sunscreen should offer broadband protection (UVA and UVB) and have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more. You should apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside, and again, immediately before. After that, reapply your sunscreen every 2 hours. If direct sun exposure is necessary, wear a hat and clothing that covers the treated area. Use this regimen during the healing period and always.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call!

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)?**

A: Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a special treatment performed with a topical photosensitizing agent called Levulan, which is activated with a light source. Levulan (ALA) is a naturally occurring substance found throughout the body. Once applied, Levulan is naturally attracted and absorbed by fast growing abnormal cells. After allowing the Levulan to incubate and fully absorb into the target cells, it is activated by a light source to produce oxygen radicals that will destroy these target cells. This treatment will remove pre-cancerous spots called Actinic Keratoses, sun damage, and blotchy pigmentation.

### **Q: How many treatments will it take to see results?**

A: Usually a series of 1-2 are necessary.

### **Q: What can I expect post-treatment?**

A: Depending on the length of Levulan incubation, you will have a sunburn like reaction that may last up to 5-7 days. Swelling, peeling, crusting, and discomfort may also occur. Some patients may have an exuberant response to PDT, and experience a much more severe sunburn like effect. However, no matter how severe the response there is absolutely NO possibility of scarring or any permanent damage.

### **Q: Do photodynamic therapy (PDT) treatments hurt?**

A: Topical anesthesia is applied before the procedure to minimize discomfort. The treatment itself may feel like you are getting a sunburn.

### **Q: What precautions should I take after treatment?**

A: You will need to be completely out of the sun for 24 hours after treatment. That means no driving, walking, or being outside for even a few minutes at a time. Wear sunscreen SPF 30 or higher and avoid direct sun exposure while you are healing for at least 3 months after your last treatment. Further protect yourself by wearing wide-brimmed hats if you expect to be out in the sun.