

Having conventional photodynamic therapy to treat your skin condition

Department of Dermatology

Information for Patients

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What is this treatment?

This treatment targets and destroys abnormal or damaged cells. This is done by applying a photosensitising gel to the treatment area. This gel works when exposed to light and destroys the damaged cell. This is called conventional photodynamic therapy.

The gel only targets abnormal or damaged cells. The surrounding healthy cells will not be harmed. It can take multiple tries for the treatment to be effective.

What can conventional photodynamic therapy be used for?

Conventional photodynamic therapy can be used to treat skin conditions like:

- Superficial basal cell carcinomas (a type of skin cancer)
- Bowen disease (squamous cell carcinoma in situ, a type of skin cancer)
- Actinic keratosis (pre cancerous skin cells)

Your doctor may want you to have this treatment for a different condition. This would make the treatment off-license. Off-license means to use a treatment in a different way that has not been approved by the manufacturer. This is common in dermatology.

If this happens, your doctor will explain how this is best for you. This will be approved and checked by the lead consultant for photodynamic therapy.

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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What are the possible side effects of treatment?

- It is very common to feel a burning or stinging pain whilst the light is on. This will be helped with cold water and a fan.
- After treatment the area can become swollen, sore, itchy, scabbed and red. This usually resolves within 2 weeks.
- After treatment the area can become infected. Contact the clinic nurse if this happens.

What do I need to do before my appointment?

You must apply moisturiser once a day for at least 1 week before treatment. Your dermatology doctor may have prescribed one for you. We recommend either Vaseline or balneum.

What to expect on the day of treatment

- The treatment area is cleaned. The photosensitising gel is applied under 2 layers of dressings. The dressings are thick and white. If you are having treatment to your head, we advise you bring a hat.
- You must then wait for 3 hours with the dressings on. You do not have to stay in hospital during this time.
- After 3 hours, you will return to clinic. The dressings will be removed and the light will be turned on. The lamp is on for around twelve and a half minutes.
- When the lamp time is done, a dressing will be applied.

Aftercare for the treatment area

You should always wash your hands before touching the treatment area to stop infection.

For the first 48 hours (2 days):

- If you can, leave the dressing on for 2 days.
- If you have pain you can take over the counter pain relief like paracetamol. You can apply a cold wet clean flannel to the area if it feels like it is burning.

After 48 hours (2 days):

- You can remove the dressing after 2 days. You can then wash the area with plain water.
- You should then apply a plain moisturiser like Vaseline or balneum to the treatment area until it heals.
- If scabs form, apply moisturiser to these too. Do not pick at the area whilst it heals.

After treatment

You should regularly protect yourself from the sun after treatment and long term. You can do this by:

- avoiding the sun,
- wearing protective clothing from the sun
- using sunscreen to exposed skin in hot weather (SPF30 plus). This is to stop the skin from getting more sun damage.

You may have a follow up appointment 3 months after treatment with the doctor or the nurse. This is to see if the treatment has worked and to see if you need more.

If you do need another cycle of treatment, this has to be 3 months after your first treatment.

More information

You can read additional information from the British Association of Dermatology and DermNet which are trusted websites:

<https://cdn.bad.org.uk/uploads/2021/12/09140231/Photodynamic-therapy-PIL-January-2023.pdf>

<http://dermnetnz.org/procedures/photodynamic-therapy.html>

Contact details

St Peter's Health Centre: **0116 258 5221**

Melton Mowbray Hospital: **01664 800 106**

Loughborough Hospital: **01509 564 376**

Hinckley District Hospital: **01455 441 918**

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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