

## **Dermatology Unit Rugby St Cross**

# **Bath PUVA treatment (Rugby St Cross)**

This leaflet aims to provide you with information about your treatment.

**Please read all of this leaflet so that you understand what is required of you and to ensure the effectiveness and safety of the treatment.**

Any additional questions that you may have can be answered by the doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

### **What is bath PUVA?**

Bath PUVA (Psoralen and UVA Light) involves soaking for 15 minutes in a bath of water containing the drug psoralen which makes the skin more sensitive to UVA light. You will then be required to stand in a UVA cabinet whilst the UVA light is given in a strictly monitored dose. Treatments are usually twice a week.

Several different skin diseases can be treated effectively with Bath PUVA such as: Psoriasis, dermatitis, vitiligo, polymorphic light eruption

### **What is UVA Light?**

Light is classified into many different parts or wavelengths. One part, which is invisible to the human eye, is known as ultraviolet light "A" (UVA). UVA light is a normal component of sunlight. Artificial light sources in the form of light tubes are available that produce UVA light.

**Please do not use** any creams, ointments, perfumed soaps or toiletries on the day of treatment. Do not use any coal tar preparations for at least 24 hours prior to PUVA therapy. This is because some of the perfumes and medicines contain chemicals which increase light sensitivity and might lead to a "sunburn" effect



## Patient Information

following PUVA treatment. They may also affect the absorption of psoralen into the skin.

Some medical conditions can be aggravated by PUVA. Before starting treatment it is important tell your doctor or the nurse if you:

- Have had a severe reaction to psoralens in the past.
- Have had any radiotherapy treatment or if any is planned.
- Have or have ever had a skin cancer.
- Have any medical condition that requires you to stay out of the sun.
- Have reason to believe you are pregnant or you are planning to get pregnant.
- Are breast-feeding.
- Are using any creams, ointments or are taking **any** medicines.

### What special precautions should you take?

- Do **not** expose PUVA treated skin to sunlight for 24 hours after treatment. Avoid sitting near a window as UVA light will pass through glass. Wear gloves whilst driving a car.
- Do **not** use sun-beds, solariums or sunbathe. These will add to your exposure to UVA light and you are likely to get sunburnt. They will also interfere with your treatment schedule.
- **Do** apply a sunblock to sun exposed skin before leaving the department. For example: to your face and hands.

### How long will treatment last?

It may take several weeks before your skin condition improves. Generally PUVA courses are for about four months. Please remember it is **important** that you **attend regularly**.

### What are the benefits of PUVA?

PUVA is used to treat a wide variety of skin diseases. Most people's skin responds well and you will normally not require any other treatment for several months. However, the benefits of PUVA are usually only temporary and at some time in the future you may require further treatment for your skin condition.

### **Are there problems associated with pregnancy or breast feeding whilst having PUVA therapy?**

The effects of PUVA therapy on the unborn child are not known. It is essential that some method of contraception be used during a course of PUVA. If you become pregnant whilst having PUVA, please inform the doctor or nursing staff as soon as possible. It is not known whether psoralens pass into the mother's milk, therefore it is advised that you do not breast feed during a course of PUVA.

### **What are the side effects?**

Side-effects that may occur include itching, soreness and freckling of the skin. It is usual to experience slight reddening and/or itching of the skin for two or three days following treatment. It is important to contact your doctor or the nursing staff if any side-effect is severe or bothers you at any stage. Often side-effects can be helped by products recommended by your doctor or the nursing staff.

### **What are the risks of PUVA therapy?**

Patients who are treated with PUVA over a number of years have an increased risk of developing skin cancers and of their skin aging quicker than normal. This is why courses are generally short and not more frequent than once a year. Patients who have been exposed to multiple courses of PUVA should keep a check on their skin for unwanted side-effects and report any suspicious area to their doctor.

### **Instructions for bath PUVA**

- Put on the glasses provided-to avoid splashes to the eyes
- Prepare the bath following the instructions the nurses have given you.
- Undress completely
- Lower yourself gently into the prepared bath, making sure you are fully covered by the water up to your neck.
- Soak for 15 minutes, mixing the water gently from time to time.
- When the 15 minutes is up, empty the bath and pat yourself dry.
- Put on your dressing gown and press the nurse call button.
- The nurse will set the UVA light cabinet to the appropriate time.
- Wear the approved goggles/face visor **during all of your time in the UVA light cabinet.**
- For male patients, the genital area must be covered during treatments.

## Patient Information

### What else should you know?

- Use a moisturizer after your treatment to combat the probable drying effect of the treatment.
- **If you miss any of your appointments, we will assume you no longer require treatment and you will be discharged.**

**If you cannot attend or would like any further information about your treatment, please phone 01788 663249 to speak to one of the nurses.**

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 01788 663249 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

#### **Document History**

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