



## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

# Photodynamic Therapy

### **What is Photodynamic Therapy?**

Photodynamic therapy is a process whereby light is used to treat sun-damaged skin.

### **How is it done?**

A special cream is applied to the area of damaged skin cells for 3 hours. These cells absorb the cream and when exposed to the red light they are destroyed, leaving the healthy skin unharmed.

### **What is Photodynamic Therapy used for?**

Photodynamic Therapy can treat pre-cancerous and some cancerous lesions. These are areas of skin that have been damaged by the sun.

### **Photodynamic Therapy is used to treat the following conditions:**

- Solar keratoses (AK)-one session of PDT will be administered
- Basal cell carcinoma (BCC)-two sessions will be administered with a week interval between
- Bowens disease (BD)-two sessions will be administered with a week interval between

### **Why choose Photodynamic therapy?**

- It is a non-surgical treatment (no knives!)
- Scarring almost never occurs
- It can be used with other forms of treatment
- The treated area rapidly recovers
- Several separate lesions can be treated at the same time if the lesions are within an area of 18cm x 8cm

### **The Procedure**

- The full treatment process will take approximately 4 hours during which time we ask that you stay in the hospital. You will probably need to have 2 separate treatments

### **Each treatment is in three steps:**

### **Step 1**

Five days before your first appointment (but not on the day) please apply a greasy ointment e.g. Vaseline to the affected area for 7 days prior to treatment, so that crusty or scaly skin can be removed more easily before treatment to allow better absorption of the cream.

### **Step 2**

The cream is applied to the area, which is then covered with a dressing and protected from light for the next 3 hours. During this time we ask that you stay on the Hospital site, although you are free to leave the clinical area for this period.

You will be advised to take a mild painkiller, e.g. Paracetamol (you should bring these with you) before having the red light shone onto the lesion.

**(Do not touch, disturb or remove this dressing)**

### **Step 3**

After 3 hours the dressing is removed and the cream is wiped away. You will then be asked to wear special goggles, while the red lamp shines over the area. The red light treatment lasts for 9 minutes and can be paused if needed.

During the red light treatment you may feel some degree of pain. To help ease this nurse may spray the area with water or position a fan to cool the skin.

### **Your Aftercare**

To avoid further light exposure of the treated skin, protect the area by wearing a simple dressing for the next 48 hours. If after this time the treated area remains moist you may wish to protect it with a simple dressing.

The area of treated skin will behave much like a graze and should be kept clean and dry. If a crust forms allow this to detach naturally, **do not** pick the area as you may cause scarring or infection. The area will heal within 2-3 weeks.

### **For Patients Requiring 2nd Treatment:**

This will normally take place a week after the first treatment. The process will be exactly as at the first treatment. If the lesion is crusty/scaly, please remember to apply a greasy ointment to the area prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment (but not on the day).

Arrangements will be made to see the dermatology doctor in 3 months in the Outpatient Department and a repeat photograph will be taken.

### **General Advice**

You may wish to bring a friend / relative with you as there is a considerable gap between application of the cream and treatment with the red light.

You may also wish to bring some reading material and enough money for refreshments.

**For further information about this leaflet contact:**

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