

Patient information

Hand and Foot PUVA (Soaks)

Dermatology Department

What is hand and foot PUVA?

This is a treatment for various inflammatory skin diseases of the hands and feet. It involves soaking the hands and feet in a solution known as Psoralen (a natural plant extract) for 15 minutes, which will make your skin more sensitive to the effects of Ultraviolet light A (UVA).

What are the benefits of this treatment?

The aim is to improve your skin condition.

What are the risks and side effects of treatment?

Acute

- Itching and skin redness are common.
- Burning, soreness and blistering.
- Freckles and tanning.

Chronic

Skin ageing with wrinkling.

Skin cancer can become more common if given in excess of 200 PUVA treatments in a lifetime.

The chance of you developing any of the side effects will depend on your skin type.

We try to reduce the risk of side effects by carrying out a thorough assessment before starting your treatment. Your skin will be closely monitored throughout your treatment.

Are there any alternatives available?

PUVA is usually offered as your skin is not responding to creams although tablet therapy can also be used in some cases.

What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?

You can continue with your creams, but your skin condition may worsen and you may require tablet therapy or admission to hospital.

Your treatment

You will have your treatment twice weekly as an outpatient and will last for about eight to twelve weeks. If tolerated, treatment times will increase during the course. If you cannot tolerate PUVA, treatment will be reduced or stopped, and you will be referred back to your Dermatologist if necessary.

Goggles must be worn during treatment to protect your eyes.

Advice during PUVA

Do:

- Tell your nurse if you are taking any new medications.
- Come regularly and let us know if you have a problem attending e.g. holidays.

Do not:

- Sunbathe or use sunbeds.
- Become pregnant during PUVA as psoralen has not been tested on pregnant women.
- Eat foods that contain natural psoralens (celery, parsnips, figs, limes or carrots) on the days you are having treatment as these may increase your sensitivity to the light treatment.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Lynn Owens
Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Phototherapy Unit (off ward 4)
Level 2
Alexandra Wing
Broadgreen Hospital
Tel. 0151 282 6892
Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6892

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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