

## Patient information

# Hand and Foot PUVA Topical

### Dermatology Department

This is a treatment for various inflammatory skin diseases of the hands and feet. It involves Psoralen gel (a natural plant extract) being applied to the affected skin to make them sensitive to the effects of ultraviolet light.

Fifteen minutes later your hands and feet are rested on Ultraviolet-A (UVA) panels with fluorescent lamps.

#### **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**

Treatment takes place twice weekly as an outpatient, and each course 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**  
**Specialist Nurse**  
**Phototherapy Unit (off ward 4)**  
**Level 2 Alexandra Wing**  
**Broadgreen Hospital**  
**Tel. 0151 282 6892**  
**Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6892**

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