

Patient information

Treating skin conditions with Narrowband Ultraviolet B Light (TL01 therapy)

Your doctor/nurse has suggested a course of narrowband light therapy. This is also referred to as TL01 Phototherapy treatment. This leaflet explains about the treatment, including potential risks and benefits. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the dermatology nurse or doctor.

What is Ultraviolet B radiation (UVB)?

Ultraviolet light rays are produced by the sun. They are not visible and are grouped into different wavelengths: UVA, UVB and UVC.

UVA rays penetrate the skin and cause tanning or darkening. UVB rays are mostly absorbed by the upper layer of the skin and are responsible for sunburn. UVC rays are absorbed by the Earth's ozone layer and are thought not to reach us.

What is Narrowband B therapy used to treat?

Narrowband UVB can be used to treat a range of conditions including Psoriasis, Eczema, Vitiligo, Mycosis fungoides, Polymorphic light eruption and other itchy skin conditions, by reducing inflammation in the skin.

What will happen when the Dermatology doctor has referred me for treatment?

The Lead Phototherapy Consultant Dermatologist will review all referrals to check that your condition is suitable for treatment. You will be contacted regarding your preferred appointment time and a note will be made of any planned holidays. The length of treatment course required to treat your condition will be discussed. Your name will be added to the waiting list and you will be contacted when a course of appointments becomes available.

It is important that all treatments are attended to achieve a good response. If

the first appointment is missed or a total of two appointments are missed during the course, the treatment course will be discontinued. Please be prompt to all appointments.

What does treatment involve?

At the first session, there will be an opportunity to discuss the potential benefits and side effects of light therapy with the nurse. You will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm you agree to treatment. You will be required to provide a list of all current medicines taken (both those prescribed by your GP and also ones purchased at the chemist). It is important that you bring a list with you to the initial appointment.

You may be asked whether you would be agreeable to have photographs taken of affected skin areas by the Medical Photographer for record/teaching purposes.

Treatments are administered by specially trained nurses in the Phototherapy treatment rooms, located in Outpatient Clinic E (signposted for the Pain Clinic) at the West Suffolk Hospital. At your first visit we may need to assess the tolerance to a small area of your skin to UVB light before the first treatment is administered. You will need to return to clinic the next day to enable us to calculate your treatment starting dose.

On arrival you will be asked to change into a gown and dressing gown and to be seated in a small waiting area outside the treatment rooms. You will be asked to complete a pre-treatment questionnaire and the nurse will examine the skin before each treatment. This will help the nurse assess how well your skin is responding.

Goggles will be provided to protect the eyes. The nurse may advise that other protective measures are appropriate, such as a face shield. Once the goggles or other protective measures have been applied ready for the treatment, they should be left in place for the duration of each treatment. Unless it has been agreed that this skin area requires treatment, men are advised to cover the genital area with a **black** sock during all treatments.

You will be asked to stand for a short time in an upright cabinet (which is open at the top). The nurse will ask you to confirm your name and date of birth before each treatment and a calculated dose of light treatment will be given. A member of the Phototherapy nurse team will remain in the room at all times. The treatment time will vary depending on many factors such as your skin type and how your skin reacts to treatment. The starting dose is likely to be only seconds and will gradually extend over the treatment course. Treatments are usually short and generally well tolerated, however it is usual to feel warm during or following light therapy.

Please allow 45 minutes for the initial appointment and 30 minutes for further treatment.

Possible side effects from treatment

- The skin may become itchy and dry.
- Your skin condition may temporarily seem worse.
- Freckles can temporarily become darker in colour.
- Some skin tanning is likely. Your skin may burn as with exposure to any form of sunlight. We try to avoid this but slight redness of the skin is likely. If mild skin redness develops, please let the nurse know when you attend for your next treatment. If you think you have signs of severe sunburn (sore, deep red or blistered skin) you must seek urgent medical advice from your GP (this may be the 'out of hours' GP service or Accident & Emergency department). It is advised to wear protective goggles as provided for treatment. It is thought that unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light may increase the risk of developing eye cataracts in the future.
- You should inform the nurse if you have a tendency to develop cold sores or have a history of rosacea, which can be aggravated by the light treatment. In these cases, a face shield will be provided.

Patient responsibilities

You must inform the nurse if you have experienced the following:

- If you have lots of moles
- If you have had skin cancer
- If you have noticed an unusual skin lesion
- If you have noticed sensitivity to the sunshine or previous light therapy
- If you have had radiotherapy
- If you have had an organ transplant
- If you have any type of cardiac implant or Pacemaker (we do not recommend light treatment if you have a Pacemaker)
- If you have any other types of implant (including metalwork)
- If you think you may be pregnant
- If you suffer from Epilepsy

The nurse should be informed of any problems experienced during or after treatments.

Fragranced products such as perfumes, aftershave lotion, deodorants and greasy ointments must not be present on the skin when attending for

treatment: These can increase the potential for developing a burn and can cause a discolouration to the skin. The nurse must be informed of any change in cream or ointments used and any change in medication before each treatment.

Facial make up and cosmetic products should not be present on skin areas being treated: Make up can be worn if the face shield is being used.

It is important to moisturise the skin *before* treatment using a cream (water based) product as advised by the Dermatology doctor/nurse pre-treatment. Greasy moisturisers such as white soft paraffin, Vaseline, 50/50 liquid/soft paraffin, Epaderm ointment and Hydromol and other ointments should **not** be applied on the morning before treatment. **It is important to moisturise the skin *after and between* treatments:** Moisturising the skin can be important in maximising the effectiveness of the light therapy.

Sun exposure must be avoided between treatments: It is important to cover the skin, particularly on sunny days. Long sleeved clothes and a hat may be necessary. Using a sunscreen with a factor of at least 30 to protect against UVA and UVB rays may be necessary. Sunbathing and use of sunbeds must be avoided during a course of light treatment.

If your skin shows signs of sunburn, treatments will be refused.

Application of a lip moisturiser with sun protection is advised if you have a tendency to develop cold sores: Cold sores can be activated by ultraviolet light. If treatment is not required to the face, a face shield will be provided.

It is important that the nurse is informed of any changes to your medicines, cream/ointment treatments or general health: Certain medicines and cream/ointment treatments can make the skin more sensitive to light treatment. It is important that you let the nurse know if you feel too unwell to have treatment.

Jewellery: Jewellery (including piercings) must **not** be worn during treatment unless impossible to remove. Jewellery should be left at home and **not** brought into the department. West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is unable to take responsibility for any personal belongings, including jewellery.

Clothing: You will be asked to change into a gown and dressing gown. These will be provided but you can bring an appropriate dressing gown with you if desired. Slip-on footwear (such as sandals or slippers) can be brought in. **Please note that footwear must be worn on entering and leaving the clinic room.**

The nurse will usually ask for all clothing to be removed once in the light treatment cabinet. In some cases, the nurse may ask for protective clothing to be brought in. If it is agreed for clothing to be worn, it is important that exactly the same area of

skin is covered for every treatment, otherwise the skin may burn. All belongings should be stored in a locker outside the changing rooms.

Hair: It is important to avoid having your hair cut or beard removed during your course of light treatment as this may lead to an increased risk of burning the skin.

Attendance: Treatments may be administered either two or three times weekly depending on your type of skin condition. You are requested to be prompt to appointments otherwise it may not be possible to receive your treatment. We try to keep to your appointment time but occasionally there are unavoidable delays. Please let the nurse know if you have concerns.

Parking: Please ensure that you bring in your appointment letter as this will be required by the parking office to enable you to park without being charged. You will be asked to take your appointment letter into the parking office near the West Suffolk Hospital Main Entrance after each appointment.

What will happen when the treatment course is completed?

An appointment will be made to be seen in the dermatology clinic. You should continue to apply any cream and ointment-based treatments as advised.

We would be grateful if you could complete a patient satisfaction questionnaire, as comments will be used to make changes to improve the clinic.

A possible increased risk of skin cancer can be associated with over exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Cancer Research UK advises that the most important thing you can do is to protect your skin from sunburn. You can use the shade, clothing and sunscreen (at least factor 30 applied generously and regularly) to protect your skin. It is advisable to get into a habit of observing your own skin and to ask your GP to check your skin if you notice any changes or abnormal areas.

Further information regarding sun protection and skin changes can be accessed on the Cancer Research UK and British Association of Dermatologists website.

Who can I contact with any queries about my treatment?

During the phototherapy clinic hours (1.30 – 5.00 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons) please phone 01284 712576.

Outside of the above clinic hours, please phone the Dermatology Nurses office on 01284 713575.

Information and support

Support groups (such as the following) may be useful:

British Association of Dermatologists (www.bad.org.uk)

Cancer Research UK (www.sunsmart.org.uk)

DermNet NZ (www.dermnet.nz.org)

Lupus UK (www.lupus.org.uk)

National Eczema Society (www.eczema.org)

Psoriasis Association (www.psoriasis-association.org.uk)

Vitiligo Society (www.vitiligosociety.org.uk)

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the hospital website www.wsh.nhs.uk and click on the link, or visit the disabledgo website:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>