



PATIENT INFORMATION

PUVA TREATMENT



PUVA therapy is a treatment in which a substance called psoralen is either taken by mouth or applied to the skin, after which the skin is exposed to special wavelengths of ultra violet light. The light is produced by fluorescent lamps positioned in a cabinet in which the patient stands.

PUVA is generally given 2 or 3 times a week. The length of each treatment is slowly increased. The length of a course of treatment varies but an average is 8-10 weeks.

Oral PUVA

The psoralen tablets are taken 2 hours before your light treatment. The tablets should be taken after a light meal. The dose of psoralen depends on your weight.

Psoralen tablets make both the skin and eyes sensitive to light for some hours. It is therefore important that you wear protective goggles during treatment. Protective glasses must then be worn for 24 hours after you take your tablets to minimise the risk of cataracts developing. We can advise you which glasses are suitable.

Practical points:

1. Do not use any skin treatment during the course of PUVA except that prescribed for you. Avoid using perfumed substances or aftershave lotion on the skin before your treatment as these can make the skin more sensitive to the light.
2. You will be asked about any medication that you may be taking before you start treatment. If you start taking any tablets or there are any changes to your tablet treatment during your PUVA course, please inform a member of staff.
3. During your course of treatment you should not sunbathe or use a sunbed. During sunny weather, a sun block should be used on exposed sites i.e. face, neck, hands. You should also take care gardening, working outdoors or spending long periods outside, especially on the day of your treatment. Protective clothing such as long sleeves and a hat are recommended.
4. You will be given special goggles to wear to protect the eyes when you are in the cabinet. These must not be removed during treatment.

Protective sunglasses must then be worn for 24 hours after treatment.

5. Male patients must wear dark underwear during treatment to protect the genitalia.
6. Female patients should not plan pregnancy during a course of treatment. If pregnancy occurs, tell us immediately.
7. Since it is not known whether psoralen passes into breast milk, it is safer not to breast feed while having treatment.

Side effects:

Occasional side effects occur during treatment. These include:

- a. A sun-burn like reaction (particularly in patients with a fair complexion). If this happens, you may be given some cream to use or your next treatment may be omitted.
- b. A prickling sensation in the skin.
- c. Nausea - this can be helped by making sure you take food before taking Psoralen i.e. don't take on an empty stomach.
- d. Dryness of the skin - helped by using moisturising creams.
- e. If you suffer from cold sores you may experience a recurrence. So make sure you tell a member of staff.

Premature ageing changes in the skin are seen in patients who have had PUVA treatment for many years and such patients are at greater risk of developing skin cancer. We therefore keep a close eye on the amount of PUVA that you received to minimise the risks.

For treatment to be effective, it is important that you attend regularly. If you miss 2 appointments without informing us, your treatment will be cancelled. If you cannot attend, please inform a member of staff.

If you have any problems following treatment, please contact the nursing staff on:-

Alexandra Hospital
Tel: 01527 503030
Ext: 44518

Worcester Royal Hospital
01905 760275

An answerphone is available so please leave a message giving your name and telephone number and someone will get back to you.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.