



Photodynamic Therapy (Blue Light Treatment)

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a treatment for skin lesions (skin growths that don't look like the skin around them) called actinic keratosis, which are early skin cancers. PDT is also used to treat some skin cancers on the surface of the skin, also known as superficial skin cancers.

PDT is a 2-Step Process:

1. A medication will be put on the treatment area that will make it very sensitive to light. You must wait _____ hours for the medication to be absorbed.
2. Your healthcare provider will shine a red or blue light on the area. The light reacts with the medication and destroys the actinic keratosis or skin cancer.

Preparing for Your Treatment

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Are allergic to soy.
- Take any medications. You may have to stop taking some of your medications because they may change the way PDT works. Tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following:
 - Medication that require prescription
 - Medication that don't require prescriptions (over-the-counter medications)
 - Retinoids (compounds found in eye creams, serums, and moisturizers)
 - Herbal Remedies
 - Vitamins
 - Dietary Supplements
 - Antibiotics. Or if you were recently taking an antibiotic
- Have a history of oral or genital herpes. This can include if you've had cold sores, fever blisters, or shingles (viral infection that causes a rash) that keep coming back.
- Currently have a cold sore or shingles outbreak.
- Have porphyria, a rare disorder that makes your skin sensitive to the sun.
- Are allergic to 5-aminolevulinic acid (ALA).
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. This medication has not been used with pregnant women, so we don't know if it's safe.
- Are sensitive to light or the sun.

The Day of Your Treatment

- On the day of your treatment, don't apply creams, lotions, or makeup on the area being treated.
- Don't shave the area being treated the day of your treatment.



- If you have a history of herpes, take your Valtrex prescription before your treatment, as instructed by your healthcare provider.
- Bring something to protect the treatment area from the weather.
 - If the treatment area is on your face, bring a wide-brimmed hat or umbrella.
 - If it isn't on your face, wear clothing that covers the area.
- Plan to be at your appointment for _____ hours.

During Your Treatment

- Your healthcare provider will apply acetone or alcohol to remove any oils and get the treatment area ready.
- Your healthcare provider will put the medication on the treatment area. The medication will make your skin sensitive to sunlight. Your healthcare provider will tell you how long it will take for the medication to be absorbed. This could be up to _____ hours. The nurse may stay with you for the entire procedure.
- A red or blue light will be shined on the treatment area. This will activate the medication. Your nurse will give you eye protection to wear the light treatment.
 - Depending on the color of light used, your treatment time can vary. If your healthcare provider uses a red light, they will shine it on the treatment area for 5 to 8 minutes. If a blue light is used, they will shine it on the treatment area for 16 - 40 seconds.
- During the light treatment, you may have some discomfort. It may feel like a stinging, prickling, or burning sensation, similar to sunburn. A fan will be provided for you to relieve any discomfort. This usually goes away after treatment but may take up to 48 hours (2 days) to go away completely.



After Your Treatment

Every patient responds differently to this treatment. For 1 to 2 weeks, you may have the following things on the treated area(s):

- Redness that feels like a sunburn
- Slight swelling
- Peeling
- Itching
- Sealing
- Crusting
- Tingling
- Oozing

You may also have mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills (feeling cold and shivering), or body aches. If you have any flu-like symptoms, call your healthcare provider.

Caring for Yourself at Home

Following the guidelines below to help manage side effects

- Apply a cool compress (such as a cold or ice pack) to the treated area a few times a day for the first 24 hours. To do this:
 - Take a clean washcloth and dip it into room temperature or cool water.
 - Then, wring it out and gently apply it to the treated area.
 - When the cool sensation goes away, soak the cloth again, and repeat these steps.
- Starting the day after your treatment, use a gentle, fragrance-free cleanser (such as Cetaphil, Dove, Basis or Eucerin) to clean the treated area. Use a clean towel to pat your skin dry and avoid rubbing the area. Then, apply a moisturizer (such as Cetaphil, Lubriderm, Aquaphor, or Vaseline) to the area to keep your skin moist.
 - Storing your moisturizer in the refrigerator can increase the cooling effect.
- If you have discomfort after your treatment, take an over-the-counter medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or aspirin. If you're allergic to these medications, or if you can't take them due to a medical condition, talk with your healthcare provider about which medication to take instead.
- You can also take an antihistamine (such as Benadryl) to help with any itching or swelling. Talk with your healthcare provider before taking this.



- For 48 hours after your treatment, don't expose the treated area to the bright light. This includes avoiding:
 - Direct sunlight
 - Indirect sunlight
 - Very bright indoor lights (such as spotlights, photocopy machines, and medical exam lights). Normal house lighting is okay.
 - Blue light. Don't sit very close to a bright computer or tv screen.
- If you must be outside after your treatment, protect the treated area from the sun. If you can't cover the treated area, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 directly on the area. Broad -spectrum means it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. If the treated area is on your face, wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- After 48 hours (2 days), continue to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 on the treated area.
- If a scab forms on the treated area, don't remove or pick at it. Apply a moisturizer such as Aquaphor, Vaseline, or Cetaphil
- Return to the office for your follow-up appointment as instructed by your healthcare provider.

Call Your Healthcare Provider if You:

- Have a fever of 100.4°F (38 °C) or higher with or without chills
- Have redness, swelling, peeling, scaling, cracking, crusting, tingling, oozing, or drainage that becomes unbearable or lasts for more than 2 weeks
- Have flu-like symptoms that get worse or don't go away
- Develop blisters, open sores, scaling, or crusting on the treated area
- Have any questions or unexpected problems

This information is brought to you by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Ocean Skin and Vein Institute- Manhattan Beach

1101 N Sepulveda Blvd. Suite 100
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
(310)546-7780