



## PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY (PDT) CARE GUIDE

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### Pre-Care Instructions and Day of Treatment

- Please come to your appointment with a freshly cleansed face. Remove all sunscreen, moisturizers, lotion and make-up.
- Please bring a wide brimmed hat, bandana or scarf, long-sleeved shirt, and/or gloves to protect the treated area from sun or other bright light after treatment.
- There is an incubation time of 1-3 hours while the medication, ALA is absorbed into your skin. You may wait in our clinic. You may bring a book or magazine to read or iPod. If you choose to leave the clinic during the incubation time, please wear a wide brimmed hat when you are outside.
- The illumination time to Blue Light is 16 minutes 40 seconds.

The light source is a “U” shape device that encircles your face or part of your body. Your eyes will be covered for protection from the light. It is normal to experience some heat and a burning sensation during the treatment. It is worse at the very beginning and may become less intense as the medication is used up by the Blue Light. We do have a fan if it gets too warm, but it has been proven that the less you use the fan, the better the treatment will be. After your treatment (PDT), your skin will feel warm to the touch and sting as though you have a bad sunburn. Every patient may react differently. You may experience redness, swelling, tenderness, and dark spots, all of which are normal and expected. Over the next 7 days, you will have a stinging sensation and dry, flaky skin.

Following treatment, it is important that you comply with the post care instructions to ensure optimal healing and comfort.

### Day 1 – 7 after treatment:

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- Stay indoors and avoid sunlight or bright indoor light for the next 48 hours. Cloudy days are equally as harmful.
- Avoid shaving treated areas.
- Wash treated areas, in cool water well at bedtime.
- During the first 12 hours cleanse the area with only cool water.
- Your skin will feel dry and tightened. Use an effective moisturizing barrier cream (CeraVe cream), Aquaphor ointment, Vaseline or natural aloe at least twice daily, as needed.
- After 12 hours you can begin using a mild cleanser.
- You may take an oral antihistamine (Claritin, Zyrtec or Benadryl) to reduce any swelling.
- Continue to take over the counter pain medication (e.g. Tylenol and Ibuprofen), as needed. Apply ice packs as needed to alleviate discomfort and swelling. The discomfort usually subsides between 48-72 hours following treatment.
- Minimize sun exposure by restricting outdoor activities to early morning or late evening and by wearing a hat or protective clothing. Please try to avoid mid-day sun. Use sunscreen with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide with a minimum of SPF 30.
- You may apply make-up once any crusting has healed. The area may be pink for 2-4 weeks.

**Sun Protection:** The medication (5-aminolevulinic acid) applied to your skin during PDT will make you photosensitive for up to 48 hours after treatment. Sun exposure, even indirect, can cause increased swelling, redness and discomfort.

Sunscreen during this time will not protect you from a skin reaction. Please follow the instructions, based on the above information, carefully. Always ensure you apply sunscreen every two hours. We recommend a minimum of SPF 30 sunscreen with Zinc.

### **Helpful tips:**

If you experience stinging, redness or irritation, you may apply Aquaphor ointment or aloe gel and a cool, water soaked cloth to the treated area.

Ice packs can be used for swelling. These can be applied over a cold water soaked cloth for 20 minutes every hour. After applying ice packs or cold compress for approximately 20 minutes, the area should be patted dry and Vaseline should be applied.

Take over-the-counter medications as needed for discomfort.

Diphenhydramine (generic Benadryl) tablets (25mgs) may be taken an hour before sleep if there is significant itching before bed.

If clear “water blisters” form, you can compress that treated area with a clean washcloth or gauze soaked in a solution of 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 cup cold water. This can be done as often as necessary for 5 – 10 minutes at a time.

### **For optimal healing, avoid the following:**

**Do not** apply any alpha hydroxyl/Retin-A/benzoyl peroxide, self-tanners or exfoliating products to the treated areas for at least 2 weeks after treatment.

**Do not** pick, rub or have a facial, waxing, or exfoliating treatments for at least 2 weeks after your PDT treatment.

**Do not** shave until swelling has resolved.

**Do not** swim in chlorinated water or salt water for at least 7 days.

**Avoid** hot tub.

Remember to avoid touching the treated areas and ensure your hands are washed to avoid contamination.

If you experience any of the following or have any questions, please contact our Care Team at (206) 456-4464.

- Severe pain
- Open, weeping skin
- Severe crusting and development of pustules
- Temperature greater than 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Hives