

## **Pre-Treatment Instructions for Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)**

This treatment is designed to help decrease the number of pre-cancers called actinic keratoses (AKs).

Depending on the length of Levulan incubation and the amount of sun damage you have incurred over your lifetime, you can expect to have a sunburn-like reaction that usually lasts about a week. Swelling, scabbing, crusting and mild discomfort may occur. Some patients may have a more exuberant response to PDT than others and experience a much more severe sunburn-like effect. If this happens, the healing time is usually longer, up to 4 weeks. It is recommended for two sessions per treatment area, typically 4-6 weeks apart. The second session is where the majority of the results are achieved. Expect the reaction from PDT to be about 25% of the reactions you would get from creams such as Efudex or Aldara.

### **Preparation for PDT**

1. On the day of treatment, please come to the office with CLEAN SKIN (wash area prior to appointment) and free of any makeup, moisturizing creams, sunscreens, perfumes or lotions on the treatment area.
2. For anyone with thick, dense hair in the planned treatment area, the treatment area should be shaved 2 days before treatment. You should not shave the treated area for at least 3 days after treatment.
3. Bring sun protective clothing to your appointment for the incubation period and to protect you on your way home. We suggest bringing sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and a scarf if we are treating the face or scalp. If you're having your hands or arms treated, you will need gloves and long sleeves. The risks of side effects (swelling, redness, scabbing, crusting and discomfort) increase dramatically with ANY sun exposure, including, INDIRECT exposure in the 96 hours following treatment. Plan to cover the treated area prior to leaving the office and while incubation occurs.
4. Plan to be in our office for 2.5 hours. This includes your incubation time of 90 to 120 minutes and Blue Light activation of about 17 minutes.
5. If you have a history of herpes simplex virus outbreaks ("cold sores" or "fever blisters") in the areas being treated, make sure to let us know so we can prescribe medication to minimize the possibility of an outbreak after treatment.
6. Please tell us if you have any contraindications to PDT or Blue Light Therapy: including pregnancy, Lupus, porphyria, allergies, hypersensitivity to Levulan, PDT and/or 400-450 nm blue light.
7. Discontinue use of any topical vitamin A products (retinoids or related derivatives) such as Differin, Epiduo, tretinoin (Retin-A) and Tazorac for one week before PDT. You may restart these medications 1 month after your second treatment.
8. Please let us know if you are taking any of the following medications as they might make your reaction more severe and increase your side effects: griseofulvin, sulfonamides

(sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim compounds like Bactrim or Septra), phenothiazines (medications ending in “azine;” these are anti-psychotic medications), and tetracyclines (doxycycline, tetracycline, minocycline).

9. Please note that the most common side effects of treatment include scaling/crusting, lightening and/or darkening of the skin called hypo/hyper-pigmentation and itching. These symptoms usually go away after 5-7 days but may persist for several weeks.

10. If you are having an extremity treated, please do not wear jewelry to your appointment. You will be asked to refrain from wearing jewelry for 3 days following your treatment due to possibly swelling. Wearing jewelry can lead to loss of circulation and possible amputation.

11. You will need to bring the following to your appointment and to have at home to use after treatment:

- A wide brimmed hat for face and scalp treatments.
- Gloves for upper extremity treatments and long-sleeved clothing for all extremity treatments.
- A gentle cleanser such as CeraVe, Cetaphil or Dove Unscented with no active ingredients and/or fragrances.
- A high-quality sunblock of at least SPF 30 (We recommend sunscreens to include: zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide)
- A thick moisturizing cream, such as CeraVe, Cetaphil, Eucerin, Aveeno with no active ingredients and/or fragrances.

12. You may also want the following for relief.

- A new container of Vaseline pure petrolatum ointment that is placed in the refrigerator and q-tips or tongue depressors to remove ointment from the container for application to your skin. It is important to keep the container of Vaseline uncontaminated by bacteria (dirty fingers, etc.).
- You may need to take a pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, especially for the first few days after treatment.

13. Please visit your patient portal to view an important video about this procedure. If you do not use the patient portal you can view this video by visiting our website and clicking on the ‘What’s New’ tab at the top and visit our ‘Doctors Quarterly YOUTUBE Channel. You will want to view the video called **Dermatology: Photodynamic Light Therapy**.