



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

Dermatology Department York:

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Telephone: 01904 726629

Opening times: Monday- Friday 7am- 5pm

Dermatology Department Scarborough:

Scarborough Hospital, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough,

YO12 6QL

Telephone: 01723 342492

Opening times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8am- 4pm

Outpatients Department Selby:

The New Selby War Memorial Hospital, Doncaster

Road, Selby, YO8 9BX

Telephone: 01904 72 4296

Opening times: Monday- Friday 8am- 5pm

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Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to give you information on your treatment that will take place in the Dermatology Clinic.

You will be advised by your doctor or nurse which treatment you will be receiving.

- Conventional (Red-Light) Photodynamic Therapy
- Daylight Photodynamic Therapy

What is Photodynamic Therapy?

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a treatment, which involves the application of a photosensitising gel and the use of a light source, either red-light or daylight, to activate this gel.

The photosensitising gel is absorbed easily into the damaged skin cells, but not into undamaged skin cells. When the light is applied to the lesion, it activates the gel and oxygen within the damaged cells, causing photo-oxidation, killing off the damaged cells.

What skin conditions are treated with PDT?

PDT treatment is prescribed for pre-cancerous skin conditions such as Bowen's Disease and Actinic Keratosis (AK) and for some superficial Basal Cell Carcinomas (BCC's).

What do I need to do before my appointment?

You may be asked to apply Vaseline or a moisturiser to the lesions for a week prior to your appointment. This will soften any crusts/ scales on your lesions. The doctor/clinician will advise you if this is required.

Important: This treatment is not suitable for patients with a soy or peanut allergy due to it containing a peanut additive.

Conventional (Red-Light) PDT

The lesion will be prepped to remove any rough skin before the gel is applied, either by gently rubbing or a surgical tool called a curettage may be used. The photosensitising gel is applied to the area of the skin lesion being treated, as well as a small margin of unaffected skin.

Dressings will then be applied to ensure the cream is not exposed to any light before the treatment. You will then be required to return three hours later for the second part of your treatment.

When you return for your light treatment, all dressings and the photosensitising cream will be removed. You will sit or lie in a comfortable position to allow the light source to be lined up with the skin lesion being treated. The length of treatment will depend on the overall size of the skin lesion being treated and how many lesions we are treating.

During treatment, you will be asked to wear goggles to protect your eyes from the brightness of the light source, and to stay as still as possible. The nurse will be readily available throughout the whole treatment time.

A dressing will be applied, and this should stay in place for 24-48 hours.

You may require a further treatment one to two weeks later. This will complete your treatment.

Is it Painful? You will be able to feel the treatment when the light source is administered. This can be painful, although some patients have described it as a tingling sensation. If you do find the treatment painful inform the nurse, cold water can be applied to the area to ease it.

Daylight PDT

Prior to treating the lesion, we will apply sunscreen to the area to be treated. This is important so we avoid any further sun damage. This will need to absorb before application of the photosensitising gel.

The lesion will be prepped to remove any rough skin before the gel is applied, either by gently rubbing or a surgical tool called a curettage may be used. The photosensitising gel is applied to the area of the skin lesion being treated, as well as a small margin of unaffected skin.

Daylight exposure must begin 30 minutes after the application of the gel and is required for the following two hours. Short breaks are allowed but total exposure should be for two hours. Full sun is not required, shelter in light shade may be taken in summer months/ if weather is too hot.

It is recommended to wear SPF 30 or above on other areas of exposed skin during this treatment.

After two hours any excess gel should be removed with water and a dressing or protective clothing should be applied for 24- 48 hours.

Is it painful? Some tingling may be felt in the treatment areas, this is normal.

What are the risks of this treatment?

- Pain and discomfort
- Inflammation
- Infection
- Blistering/ ulceration
- Bruising
- Changes in hair growth
- Scarring
- Colour change to skin

What happens after treatment?

- You may experience some temporary redness and inflammation (swelling), similar to that of a mild burn.
- A crust may form over the treated area, and this may weep. This is normal. Do not pick the scab, this can take seven to 10 days to come away.
- The area may be painful after treatment. Simple painkillers can be taken as required.
- The area should be kept dry and covered for 48 hours after treatment and protected from sunlight.
- After 48 hours the dressing should be removed and washed as normal. Pat the area dry with a clean towel.
- Vaseline may be applied to the crusted area 48 hours after treatment.

Will I see the consultant again after completion of my treatment?

The nurse will arrange a follow up appointment with your consultant after the last prescribed treatment; this is usually two to three months later.

Who will I contact if I have a problem after the treatment?

If you have any further questions or concerns about PDT you can phone the Dermatology Department, during clinic opening times, which can be found on the front page of this leaflet.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Katy Maskell, Sister, Dermatology Department, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726621.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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