

Phototherapy

Information and advice for patients

What is Phototherapy

Phototherapy is the use of ultraviolet (UV) light to treat several skin conditions like psoriasis, eczema, nodular prurigo, lichen planus and lichen simplex. The most common forms of phototherapy used are narrowband UVB and PUVA (psoralen, a medication that increases the effect of light on the skin and UVA).

How does Phototherapy work?

UV light reduces inflammation in the skin and can help in various skin disorders such as psoriasis, eczema, generalized itching and polymorphic light eruption and other skin condition suitable for light treatment.

What does Phototherapy involve?

Phototherapy treatments are given in a walk-in cabinet 3 times per week. You would expect to have around 30 to 40 treatments. The duration of each treatment varies on which machine patient is using.

What are the potential side effects of Phototherapy?

Potential short-term side effects include sunburn, erythema, cold sores, and excessive dryness of the skin. Potential long-term side effects include premature skin ageing and increased risk of cancer. Psoralen tablets may cause nausea.

What do I need to avoid whilst having Phototherapy?

- Medicines, (including non-prescribed preparations), that make you more sensitive to UV light. Please inform our staff of the medicines you might be taking during phototherapy.
- Additional sun exposure and/or sunbed use should be avoided before and during phototherapy.
- Haircuts or change in hairstyles, as they may result- in burning previously covered skin
- Perfumes, deodorants, or aftershaves just before phototherapy as they may contain substances that sensitize the skin to light.
- Ointments or oil-based preparations just before phototherapy other than those directed by phototherapy staff.

Cancellation/DNA policy?

Please inform staffs to cancel an appointment by ringing the number provided. For two DNA (DID NOT ATTEND), patient will automatically be discharged from phototherapy department and will not receive further OPA follow-up.

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Where can I get more information?

The website of the British Association of Dermatologists (www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk/a-z-conditions-treatments) where patient information leaflets on various skin conditions and treatments including different types of phototherapy are available.

How will I provide feedback on my Phototherapy treatment?

We would appreciate if you would complete our survey.

SWBH Dermatology website where our patient information leaflets (BAD website) is available.

How can I contact Phototherapy staff?

Phototherapy Department:

0121 507 6612/6609

Dermatology OPD:

0121 507 6772/6620

Dermatology department

Sandwell and West Birmingham

NHS Trust

Dudley Road

Birmingham B18 7QH

0121 507 6612/6609

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British Association of Dermatologists (2022) *Phototherapy*. Available at:
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