

## Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) for Actinic Keratoses

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is an FDA-approved procedure used to treat Actinic Keratoses (pre-cancerous lesions) of the face, scalp, or arms. PDT involves application of a chemical, followed by exposure to a light that activates the medication to treat sun-damaged skin.

### The process of PDT involves:

- 1) Cleaning the designated area(s) with acetone.
- 2) Debridement by the physician of the areas. This may involve a curette or a “sandpaper” tape to scrape off thicker lesions.
- 3) Application of Levulan Kerastick® or Ameluz® gel.
- 4) Waiting for approximately 2 hours while the medication incubates.  
\*You may have lunch (indoors) or do work during this time. Please avoid sun exposure during this time, as it may cause premature activation of the medication. Please do not leave the facility, and stay away from windows!
- 5) Return to clinic at the appointed time.
- 6) You will be placed under the PDT machine in the proper position with protective eyewear. You will be given a fan to use during treatment which may be adjusted for your comfort.
- 7) Light exposure will be for exactly 16 minutes and 40 seconds. The machine automatically turns off after this time. You may feel tingling, stinging, or warmth with treatment, especially for the first few minutes. This sensation often improves as the treatment proceeds.
- 8) Once light exposure has been completed, the clinic staff will direct you to the sink to wash the area with gentle soap. Pat dry.
- 9) Clinic staff will apply a thick layer of sunscreen to the treated areas. Please apply sunscreen daily to all treated areas.
- 10) Schedule a follow-up appointment for 4 weeks after your treatment to check on the treated areas.
- 11) Wear your wide-brimmed hat as you exit the clinic and in the car as well.

### PRE-PDT INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) If you are prone to cold sores (herpes labialis), you will be prescribed a medication (valacyclovir 1000mg x 2 oral tablets) to take the morning of the appointment and 2 tablets 12 hours later the same day. This is to prevent cold sores from the treatment.
- 2) The morning of treatment, please wash the areas to be treated thoroughly, and do not apply makeup (if the face will be treated).
- 3) Please bring a wide-brimmed hat for use after treatment.
- 4) Prepare to spend 2-3 hours with us for the treatment. You may bring a book, laptop, ipad, etc, for your use during this time. You may have lunch during this time as well.

**POST-PDT INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1) Swelling, redness, crusting, and scaling are common after treatment, especially for the first week. Peeling will be noted 1-3 weeks after the procedure.
- 2) Wash the treated area(s) twice daily with a gentle cleanser and apply moisturizer twice daily. Apply a thick emollient moisturizer such as petroleum jelly, Aquaphor, or Vaseline to crusted or oozing areas three times a day.
- 3) Please practice strict sun avoidance for 3-5 days following the procedure. If you are able, please plan to stay home/indoors during this time. If you must go out, please liberally apply sunscreen with titanium dioxide and zinc oxide daily and wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- 4) Make-up may be applied if desired after 3-5 days if there is no crusting.
- 5) Avoid scrubs or exfoliants and cosmetic procedures such as facials to the treated area(s) for 2 weeks.
- 6) Refrain from shaving with a razor for 5 days after treatment.
- 7) You may take over the counter pain medications such as Tylenol or Advil if needed for pain.

PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU EXPERIENCE INTENSE DISCOMFORT, EXTREME REDNESS OR SWELLING, OR OTHER SYMPTOMS OF CONCERN. Again, swelling, redness, crusting, and scaling are common after treatment, especially for the first week. Peeling will be noted 1-3 weeks after the procedure.