

# ULTRA VIOLET – B PHOTOTHERAPY

## PATIENT INFORMATION

### WHAT IS PHOTOTHERAPY:

Artificial ultraviolet light (narrowband UVB) is used to treat various skin conditions such as psoriasis, dermatitis/eczema etc. Treatment is given standing in a phototherapy booth.

Ultra violet light given in our booth is UVB which are absorbed by the upper layers of the skin (epidermis) and can cause burning or tanning. It is different to UVA light (in sunlight and certain solariums), which penetrates deeper into the lower layers of the skin (dermis).

UVB is safe to use in pregnancy and breast-feeding

### TREATMENT WITH PHOTOTHERAPY:

- Your **skin type** will be assessed by your dermatologist.
- The nurse will give you treatment usually 2 or 3 times a week, with at least a **24-hour gap between treatments**.
- At each session you will be asked how your skin reacted to the previous treatment so that the next treatment can proceed.
- You will have booked a **review with your dermatologist every 6-8 weeks**.
- Every person's skin is different and some may require more or fewer sessions.
- **Protective UV blocking glasses** are supplied and must be worn during treatment. They must not be removed until the treatment session is finished.

### WHAT TO DO ON TREATMENT DAYS:

- Your skin must be clean and **no perfume or aftershave** applied before treatment. Basic moisturisers can be used before and after treatment.
- Avoid other forms of UV exposure during treatment, such as excessive sunlight or sunbeds/solariums. You may get too much UV exposure and burning.
- Males should **cover their genitals** during the treatment.
- Avoid alcohol before treatment to prevent sensitivity to the UV light and for your general safety.
- Please wear the **same style of underwear** for your sessions, to avoid burning areas that previously have been covered. Similarly, avoid radical haircuts or style changes midway through treatment.
- Please **remove any jewellery** before treatments.
- If you cannot attend treatment sessions for any reason, please contact our staff. If regular attendance does not occur over the treatment course, it may be suspended.

### WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR TREATMENT:

- Be aware of any after effects and at your next treatment advise the nurse.
- Report any changes in medications or health conditions. Some medications can make the skin more sensitive to UV light.
- Apply sunscreen to face, neck and hands after your UV light treatment.

## **POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF PHOTOTHERAPY:**

### **1. Redness or burning**

Treatment may produce a slight pinkness to the skin. This usually happens a few hours after the treatment, and disappears within a few hours.

Occasionally redness or burning occurs despite the careful treatment protocols.

If this happens: take cool baths/showers, apply plenty of moisturiser, drink lots of water and advise the nurse before your next treatment.

If SWELLING and/or BLISTERING occur, contact our rooms and ask to speak to your dermatologist. If it is out of hours, contact your GP or an emergency department.

### **2. Tanning**

This is expected. Despite tanning, the skin can remain sensitive to the sun and burn, so do not get extra sun exposure over and above your treatment. Use a good sunscreen with broad-spectrum cover with a minimum SPF 30+ when outdoors.

### **3. Skin changes**

Prolonged and repeated courses of phototherapy can potentially increase your risk of skin cancer, especially in fair skinned people, or people who already have had lots of sun exposure over their lives.

If you notice any changes on your skin, inform the nurse at your next appointment, and let your dermatologist know at your review appointment.

### **4. Premature skin ageing**

Long term UV exposure can lead to skin ageing, wrinkling and dryness of the skin. The face can be covered during treatment to minimise UV light exposure. Using sunscreen (as above) especially on the face is important after your treatment.

### **5. Itching**

This may occur during the first few weeks of treatment. Moisturise regularly. If it is persistent speak to the nurse or your dermatologist about itching.

### **6. Photosensitivity**

Some plants, weeds and vegetables may cause your skin to be more sensitive to UV light than usual, so avoid handling them for at least 2 hours before treatment e.g. celery, parsnips or figs.

### **7. Cold sores**

UV light can cause reactivation of cold sore virus (herpes virus). It is recommended to use sunscreen in affected areas before treatment.

If you have any questions or problems during the course of your treatment please call:  
Adelaide Skin & Eye Centre 8211 0000 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)