

Royal Surrey County Hospital



NHS Foundation Trust

Treatment with Ultra Violet radiation UVB (TL-01)

A Patient Information Booklet



Phototherapy Department

Your Consultant has referred you for a course of TL-01. This leaflet explains this treatment in detail including the risks, benefits and what the treatment will involve.

What is ultraviolet B radiation (UVB)?

Ultraviolet (UV) rays are produced by the sun. Although they can't be seen, they are an important part of sunlight and are grouped into different wavelengths: UVA, UVB and UVC.

UVB radiation has been found to treat skin conditions that are caused by overactive immune cells in the skin, as it reduces their activity. A specific wavelength of UVB is thought to be the most useful range for treating skin conditions. This is referred to as narrowband UVB or TL-01.

Treatment with UV is often referred to as phototherapy

What can narrow band UVB treat?

It is mainly used to treat psoriasis, but it can also be used for other skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, vitiligo, mycosis fungoides, and polymorphic light eruption.

What does treatment involve?

The treatment is given in the Phototherapy Unit by specially trained phototherapists. You will need to undress and stand in a phototherapy unit, which is a cabinet containing fluorescent tubes that produce UVB rays. Each machine is screened off to make sure your treatment is given in private.

You will be given a calculated dose of narrow band UVB. This is then repeated 2 or 3 times per week over several months. You may feel a warm sensation during treatment, but it will not hurt.

Benefits of TL-O1

Most patients with psoriasis find their skin has improved after about 30 treatments and remains clear for 3 to 4 months or sometimes longer.

Consent

When you discussed this treatment with the Consultant you will have signed a consent form. You will be asked to confirm this consent on your initial phototherapy assessment. The consultant will have discussed any alternatives with you.

On the day of your treatment:

Do not wear perfumes, deodorants, aftershave lotions or other cosmetic products before your treatment. Some of these contain substances, which make your skin more sensitive to light (photosensitisers). You can use these after each treatment. For the same reason, please let us know if you have **started any new medications or creams**, including non prescribed medication e.g. antihistamines (hayfever treatments) or alternative remedies (St John's Wort). It is advised to refrain from eating figs, celery, parsley, citrus fruits and strawberries prior to your treatment as these are also photosensitisers.

On treatment days please do not apply any creams or ointments to your skin before you go in the machine apart from a water based moisturiser, such as Aqueous cream, E45 or Diprobase. Do not use oily creams, as these could cause burning and prevent the UVB from being absorbed. We suggest that you moisturise beforehand with a water based moisturiser, as this helps your skin to absorb the ultraviolet light. If you are not sure which creams you can use, please ask a member of the phototherapy staff.

It is not possible to treat patients safely if they are under the influence of alcohol.

Reduce your exposure to the sun's rays, to minimise the risk of sunburn. Cover up with long sleeved clothes, particularly on sunny days; you may also want to wear a hat. Use a sunscreen with a factor of at least 20 that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Re-apply it regularly. You must not sunbathe or use a sunbed during the whole course of your treatment.

Let us know prior to each treatment if you are exposing any areas of skin that have not been exposed to the ultraviolet light before e.g. recently removed facial hair or if you have had a haircut which exposes previously unexposed skin.

What happens during treatment?

Let the phototherapy staff know you have arrived. At your first visit you may need to have a light test, which allows us to see your skin's tolerance to UVB. We may need this to calculate your starting dose. You will need to come back 24 hours afterwards, so we can examine the site where you had the light test. We will then be able to start your treatment.

We usually ask that you remove all your clothing and jewellery although you can keep your underwear on if this area of skin is not affected. However, men must either wear dark underwear or cover their genitalia with a sock or jock strap while in the machine. If you wear underwear, please make sure it covers the same area on each visit. If an area of skin that has previously been covered is exposed to the UVB treatment, it may burn.

We will give you goggles to protect your eyes and tell you how to stand in the machine, to make sure all your affected skin receives the UVB rays and to ensure that all your skin is exposed evenly each time.

The time that you are in the machine will depend on many factors such as your skin type (fair or dark) and skin condition. Your starting dose of UVB may only be a few seconds and then gradually built up. Please allow 15-30 minutes for your treatment, to allow time for changing.

The machine is quite bright and you may feel warm if you need to stay in the machine for a long time. Let us know if you find it uncomfortable, as we can give your treatment in divided doses.

How often will I need to have this treatment?

This depends on your skin condition but this treatment is usually quite intensive. We generally give treatments 2 or 3 times a week for about 20 weeks. If you know this is going to be difficult please discuss it with the therapist.

We do our best to keep your appointment time, but occasionally there may be a short queue. Please ask one of the phototherapists if you are concerned about your waiting time.

What are the risks?

Your doctor or nurse will discuss the possible complications of this treatment with you in more detail, but you need to be aware of the following:

- Your skin can occasionally become itchy and dry.
- Your skin condition could temporarily worsen.

- Your skin may burn, with redness and soreness and occasionally blistering as with any form of sunlight. We will try to avoid this, but some tanning redness of your skin is likely. Please let us know if your skin does become sunburnt. This usually develops 8-14 hours after your treatment and usually settles within 24 hours.
- Very occasionally patients develop polymorphic light eruption, which is an itchy rash due to sunlight.
- As with too much sun exposure, long-term use of UVB (many months to years) may age your skin and increase your risk of developing skin cancer. This increased risk is very slight at first, but increases after about 200-300 treatments.
- If you do not wear the protective goggles in the unit, you risk developing sunburn like reaction to your eyes within a few hours of exposure. It may also increase your risk of developing eye cataracts in the future. You may open eyes during treatments only when you are wearing the protective goggles provided.
- If you have rosacea or a history of cold sores which can be aggravated by the sun, we may shield your face during treatment.

UVB is most suitable for people with extensive skin problems, but may not be appropriate for you if you have very fair skin, or if your condition becomes worse in sunlight.

It is also important to note that your skin condition may flare up again. If it does, you will need further treatment of UVB or another type of treatment in the future to manage it.

What do I need to do after my treatment?

You may want to apply your moisturiser or other creams and ointments after your treatment. You can then get dressed, book your next appointment and go home. Follow-up appointments may be made in advance or at the end of the appointments. UVB tends to cause dryness to the skin so you may find it more comfortable to use your moisturiser regularly, usually twice a day.

If you develop sunburn apply emollients and take painkillers as necessary. If you get blistering or feel unwell please attend the A&E department where cream or oral steroids may be prescribed.

Are there any follow-up appointments?

You will be able to book up to 4 follow-up appointments in advance. Please remember to keep all your appointments and let us know if you cannot attend for any reason. If a follow-up appointment with the Consultant is required, you will be advised on how to book this by the Phototherapist.

What if I am unable to attend treatment?

Please inform the physiotherapy reception on 01483 464153.

The treatment is less effective if there are gaps in the treatment e.g. holidays and cancelled appointments. Please try to avoid this if at all possible in order to fully benefit from your treatment.

Royal Surrey County Hospital - Contact Information

Physiotherapy Reception: 01483 464153

A&E Reception: 01483 464156

Dr Wong's Secretary: 01483 464167

At the time of publishing the phototherapy service runs between 7.00- 9.30 each weekday morning.

Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) "Being Open" best practice framework, November 2010.

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located in far left corner as you enter the main reception area. They can also be contacted by telephone on:

01483 402757

Opening hours: 09.30 - 16.30 Monday to Friday. Alternatively they can be contacted via e-mail on:

rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact us on:

01483 402757

Compiled by Deb Hughes and Michelle Dawson (Physiotherapy) using information obtained from St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust

Review Date : April 2013 Reviewed by: M Dawson

PIN 11070132 - 349