

Long term side effects

Exposure to natural ultra-violet light can lead to skin ageing. Similarly, patients who have had PUVA therapy for many years are susceptible to this 'photoageing.' There is also an increased risk of developing some forms of skin cancer. So the amount of PUVA you receive will be closely monitored.

Risk of damage to the lens of the eye is extremely low but theoretically there is a risk. This is why it is **important** to wear appropriate eye protection during treatment.

Help us to help you

- Please arrive on time for your treatment.
- If you are unable to attend you should telephone the department on **01744 646431**
- Consult staff about any problems or difficulties you may have with your treatment.
- Please do not bring children with you as nurses cannot be held responsible for them whilst you are receiving treatment
- For the treatment to be effective it is important to attend regularly. **Patients who do not attend for 1 week will be discharged from clinic.**
- The department is open from Monday to Friday inclusive, closed only during public holidays, statutory days, Christmas and New Year.

**in case of problems, telephone
01744 646431 or 01744 646633
and ask to speak to a member of the nursing staff**

This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages/formats on request

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Produced by Dermatology Nurse Specialist

Department of Dermatology Phototherapy

**01744 646431 or
01744 646633**

**Bath Puva –
Psoralen drug in combination
with Ultra Violet A light**

(Treatment of skin conditions)

Patient Information Leaflet

**St Helens Hospital
Marshalls Cross Road
St Helens WA9 3DA**

PUVA is the name of a treatment for certain skin conditions and stands for the use of a **Psoralen** drug in combination with Ultra Violet A light. The drug must be combined with exposure to the light for treatment to be effective.

Psoralen bath lotion is mixed with warm water. You then soak in the bath for 15 minutes. After towelling dry, your UVA treatment is given. Towels will be provided.

Goggles should be used when bathing to avoid splashing the solution into your eyes.

The UVA is supervised by a nurse and takes place in a stand-up cabinet containing florescent tubes. Goggles and a protective visor **must** be worn during treatment whilst in the cabinet.

Practical points

Treatment is usually given twice weekly. As treatment progresses you will need to spend longer time in the department. A course of treatment varies from patient to patient but on average is about 10 weeks for Psoriasis. It may be longer for other conditions.

Psoralen makes the skin sensitive to light for some hours, therefore following treatment suitable sun protection should be used – clothing or sun lotion.

Throughout the course of treatment you **should not** sunbathe or use a sunbed at any time, and avoid unnecessary exposure of the skin to sunlight.

It is important that no clothing is worn whilst undergoing treatment in the 'light cabinet'.

Men must wear a dark coloured sock or dark coloured underwear to protect their genitals during treatment in the cabinet.

DO NOT use any skin treatments during your course of PUVA unless the supervising doctor has prescribed it.

You must inform medical or nursing staff about any pills or creams that may have been prescribed or given to you elsewhere. Some medications/creams can make your skin sensitive to ultraviolet light and could cause a sunburn reaction.

Avoid using cosmetics, perfumes or aftershave on your skin on the treatment days.

Pregnancy is best avoided during a course of PUVA treatment, although no problems have been reported. It is a good rule to avoid PUVA when you are pregnant. If pregnancy does occur, tell the medical or nursing staff.

Jewellery, for example rings, if worn at the start of treatment should be worn at every treatment thereafter, as areas covered at the start will burn if subsequently exposed. For the same reason avoid drastic hairstyle changes or hair cuts midway through treatment.

Side effects

Occasional side effects may occur. These include:

- Redness – a sunburn like reaction (especially if you are fair skinned).
- A pricking sensation. (This may occur even on the days between treatments. Occasionally it is severe enough to stop treatment.
- Dryness of the skin, which normally responds to moisturising creams.
- Itching of the exposed skin occasionally occurs but usually responds to soothing creams, allowing treatment to continue.