

Help us to help you

Please arrive on time for your treatment.

If you are unable to attend or you need to contact one of our team for advice regarding any problems or difficulties you have with your treatment, you should telephone the department on the contact numbers:

01744 646431 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 8am-4.30pm
(closed 12-1.30pm)

01744 646433 Mondays 1.30pm-4.30pm

You may also contact your Consultant's Secretary on the numbers below Monday-Friday 9am-5pm Dermatology Secretaries:

- 01744646609- Dr.....
- 01744646610- Dr.....
- 01744646613- Dr.....
- 01744646614- Dr.....
- 01744646688- Dr.....

If you have any severe side effect to treatment and need advice or help outside of the above hours, please contact your GP, walk-in centre or accident and emergency if necessary.
Please do not bring children with you as nurses cannot be held responsible for them whilst you are receiving treatment.

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633



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St Helens and Knowsley
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Phototherapy Oral (systemic) PUVA

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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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.

The Psoralen tablets are usually taken two hours before exposure to the UVA light. The tablets should not be taken on an empty stomach but with a light meal or snack. The amount of tablets taken depends on your body weight. Psoralen makes the eyes sensitive to light for some hours. After taking tablets, suitable glasses, which protect the eyes from UVA light must be worn for 24 hours. These will be provided.

The UVA is supervised by a nurse and takes place in a stand-up cabinet containing florescent tubes. Goggles 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 a longer time in the UVA cabinet. A course of treatment varies from patient to patient but on average is about 10 weeks for Psoriasis.

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.

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

Do not use any skin treatments during your course of PUVA unless the supervising doctor has prescribed it. You should inform medical or nursing staff about any pills or creams that may have been prescribed or given to you elsewhere.

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.

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.

Feeling sick and queasy. This is usually mild and advice can be given regarding this.

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. 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 and after treatment.