

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.

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.

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



www.sthk.nhs.uk



St Helens and Knowsley
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Topical Hand and foot PUVA

Department of Dermatology Phototherapy

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in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

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

Author: Dermatology Nurse Specialist
Department: Dermatology
Document Number: STHK1155
Version: 003
Review date: 01 / 02 / 2025

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.

Topical Psoralen is used to treat small areas of skin, for example hands and feet. The Psoralen is diluted in water and the affected areas are soaked for 15 minutes before UVA treatment.

The UVA is supervised by a nurse and a unit containing fluorescent tubes is used for the treatment. This will be shown to you before treatment. Goggles and a UV protective visor **must** be worn during treatment.

Practical points

Treatment is usually given twice weekly.

As treatment progresses you will need to spend a longer time in the department.

A course of treatment varies from patient to patient but on average is about 3-4 months (up to 30 treatments for hands and up to 40 treatments for feet).

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.