

Guidelines for Ultra Violet Light Treatment for Skin Disorders nUVB (narrow band ultra violet B)

Ultraviolet light reduces inflammation of the skin and can help in various inflammatory skin disorders.

Narrowband UVB in which a small part of the UVB spectrum is used to treat the skin condition.

UVB is used to treat common skin conditions such as psoriasis, atopic eczema, other forms of dermatitis, polymorphic light eruption, generalised itching, pityriasis lichenoides, cutaneous T cell lymphoma, lichen planus, vitiligo and other less common conditions.

What does nUVB phototherapy involve?

nUVB is given in the dermatology department in a walk in cabinet containing fluorescent light bulbs. The treatment schedule is usually three times per week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday).

Before your treatment starts you will have a test of ultraviolet light on an area of your skin which is assessed 24 hours later.

The first few treatments will often last less than one minute, and the duration of exposure to ultraviolet light will gradually increase up to a number of minutes.

What reasons might prevent you having nUVB

- If you are unable to attend regularly for treatment.
- If you are unable to stand unaided for up to ten minutes.

- If your skin condition is made worse by natural sunlight.
- If you have xeroderma pigmentosum or lupus erythematosus.
- If you have had skin cancer.
- If you are taking a medicine which suppresses your immune system, such as ciclosporin or methotrexate.
- If you are taking medicines that make you more sensitive to sunlight.
- If you have reached the maximum number of light treatments in a lifetime.

Do I need to avoid anything whilst having nUVB

- Medicines that make you more sensitive to ultraviolet light. You should inform the phototherapy staff of any new medicines prescribed or purchased, including herbal preparations.
- Additional sun exposure or the use of sunbeds.
- Excessive quantities of foods such as celery, carrots, figs, citrus fruits, parsnips and parsley; these can make you more sensitive to ultraviolet light.
- Perfumed products.
- Creams, ointments and lotions other than moisturisers, unless directed by the phototherapy staff.

- Having your hair cut whilst having nUVB, as this may result in burning of previously covered skin.

What are the potential side effects of phototherapy?

The short-term side effects of phototherapy include:

- Redness and discomfort (sunburn).
- Dry and itchy skin.
- Folliculitis- inflammation of the hair roots may occur. This does not cause discomfort and usually require no treatment or interruption of the UV therapy.
- A sunlight-induced rash called polymorphic light eruption may develop whilst receiving ultraviolet light.
- Cold sores - if you are prone to these it is advisable to cover the area usually affected with sun block when having ultraviolet treatment.
- Blisters in areas of psoriasis.
- Worsening of skin disease.

Potential long-term side effects of phototherapy include:

- Premature skin ageing.
- Skin cancer (the risk of skin cancer is related to your total lifetime exposure to ultraviolet light, and other factors such as how easily you burn in the sun)

Other Important Information

- Whilst in the cabinet you will need to wear UV opaque goggles
- All male patients will need to wear dark underpants or pouch to shield their genitalia during treatment in the cabinet.

- You should not expose any part of yourself to strong sunlight after treatment as your skin has been sensitised to ultra violet light and you may get burned.
- Protect yourself from sunlight by wearing appropriate clothing.
- Creams/ointments may have been prescribed for you during your course of treatment. None should be applied less than 2 hours prior to treatment.
- During your treatment avoid using cream or ointment unless it has been prescribed for you by your dermatologist
- Always consult the Dermatology Department before starting on any new tablets or creams during a course of nUVB phototherapy.
- Please inform nursing staff of any problems, such as soreness, redness, itching or burning at each visit as soon as possible if you are worried or uncertain. It may be necessary to reduce the amount of treatment or miss treatments. nUVB will not be given if the skin is too red at the next appointment.
- If you fail to attend your appointment for nUVB without contacting the department this may affect your course of treatment.

Dermatology Department

01392 405518

If you are unable to attend for treatment you, a friend or relative must phone to let the Dermatology Department know

If you would like further information and support regarding your skin condition, you can find helpful resources and support groups on the following website; <https://skinsupport.org.uk>

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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