

Photodynamic Therapy – Daylight Protocol

Daylight Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a newer approach to traditional PDT. It allows more flexibility in patients activity after the treatment as the traditional protocol required 48 hours with absolutely no sun or outdoor exposure.

PDT is a safe, non-invasive procedure to treat pre-cancerous lesions, such as actinic keratoses (AKs), with the added potential cosmetic benefit of reducing brown spots and smoothing skin texture.

The treatment is performed with a topical photosensitizing solution called Levulan/Ameluz (ALA), which is activated with a light source. ALA is a naturally occurring substance found throughout the body. Once applied, ALA is naturally attracted and absorbed by fast growing abnormal cells. After allowing the ALA to incubate and fully absorb into the target cells, it is activated by a light source that emits blue, visible light. This causes the skin to produce oxygen radicals that will destroy these target cells. This treatment will help remove pre-cancerous spots called actinic keratoses (AKs) and sun damage.

Usually a series of 1-2 treatments is required to get adequate clearance of the actinic keratoses. Treatments may need to be repeated annually.

What to Expect During Treatment

Please be prepared to spend a minimum of 3 hours total with us for your visit.

First, we will prep your skin with a cleansing solution.

Then, we will apply the ALA, wait 30 minutes, and apply sunscreen to all treated areas. Next, is the incubation period where you will go outside and sit in the shade to get indirect sunlight on the treated areas for **2 hours**. Do not wear a hat or sunglasses that may cover the treated area. During this period, you may experience slight stinging and burning.

After the incubation period, you will sit under the blue light for 10 minutes. The treatment itself may feel like you are getting a sunburn. Patients report feeling mild heat, burning and stinging. We will apply physical sunscreen before you leave.

Post Care Instructions

You will need to be careful when outdoors for the first week, *but unlike the traditional PDT treatment protocol which required ZERO outdoor activity for 48 hours*, you may be outdoors,

with a hat and plenty of sunscreen. Still some patients will note pain or burning after the treatment when in the sun so if this occurs, you should call us and stay indoors out of the sun. We encourage you to avoid prolonged sun exposure for the first 48 hours after treatment.

Keep the treated area clean by washing twice a day with a mild soap, like SMD Purify Ultra Gentle Cleanser, Cetaphil or Dove so there is no risk for infection. Apply Aquaphor and SPF 50 sunscreen (like SMD Sheer Physical or Neutrogena Zinc SPF 50) after washing. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours.

You may also apply Aquaphor as many times per day as needed. Other moisturizers and makeup are also fine.

Do not use any scrubs, toners, glycolic acid or retinol creams for 10 days.

Take pain medication as needed like Tylenol or Advil.

Use cold packs as needed for swelling or pain.

What to Expect Post Treatment

You may have a sunburn-like reaction for 5-7 days. This can mean anything from being light pink to a more reddened, swollen appearance. Crusting and peeling may begin on day 3-4. Please do not pick at your skin.

If you have severe pain, blisters, oozing, or feel the area may be infected, please call us.