

Patient information

Bath PUVA

Dermatology Department

You have been advised to have Bath PUVA treatment for your eczema or psoriasis. There may be alternative treatments available. Please discuss this with your doctor or nurse.

What is bath PUVA?

- Bath PUVA involves taking a bath containing a solution known as Psoralen (a natural plant extract), which will make your skin more sensitive to the effects of ultraviolet-A (UVA) light.
- You will have a safety test called an MPD (see leaflet PIF 629) before starting bath PUVA.
- You should lie naked in the warm bath immersed up to the neck for 15 minutes. The nurse will time this. Do not add more water, as it is important that the bath conditions stay constant.

What are the benefits of bath PUVA?

Bath PUVA cannot cure your skin condition, the aim is to improve and control it.

What are the risks and side effects of bath PUVA?

Acute

- Itching.
- Some skin redness is common.
- Burning, soreness and blistering.
- Freckles, tanning.
- Cold sores (if a sufferer).

Chronic

- Skin ageing with wrinkling.
- Skin cancer can become more common if given in excess of 200 PUVA treatments in a lifetime.

The chance of you developing any of the side effects will depend on your skin type. We try to reduce the risk of side effects by carrying out a thorough assessment before starting your treatment.

Your skin will be closely monitored throughout your treatment.

What would happen if I did not have the treatment?

Without treatment it is unlikely that your skin condition will improve.

Your treatment

Immediately following the bath, you should pat yourself dry (rubbing yourself dry may remove the psoralen) and then you will be asked to stand in the UVA cabinet to receive your light treatment, which will take between two to twelve minutes.

Treatment takes place twice weekly as an outpatient and will last from about eight to twelve weeks.

If the PUVA is tolerated, treatment times will increase during the course so you will spend more time in the UVA cabinet. If you cannot tolerate PUVA, treatment dosage will be reduced or stopped and you will be referred back to your Dermatologist.

- Male patients should shield their genitalia with dark coloured sock for protection, as light treatment may increase the risk of skin cancer in this area.

Eye protection during bath PUVA

- Glasses / goggles must be worn in the bath and in the UVA cabinet to protect your eyes. If the solution splashes in your eyes, tell the nursing staff immediately.
- There is usually no need to wear protective glasses following treatment unless your skin disease is very extensive.

Advice during bath PUVA

Do:

- Inform nurses of new medications you are taking.
- Attend regularly and let us know if you have a problem attending e.g. holidays.
- Avoid changes in hairstyle

Do not:

- Sunbathe or use sunbeds.
- Become pregnant during PUVA as psoralen tablets have not been tested on pregnant women.
- Wear cosmetics / perfumes during PUVA as they increase sensitivity to PUVA.
- Eat foods that contain natural psoralens (celery, parsnips, figs, limes or carrots) on the days you are having treatment as these may increase your sensitivity to the light treatment.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Lynn Owens

Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Phototherapy Unit (off ward 4)

Level 2

Alexandra Wing

Broadgreen Hospital

Tel: 0151 282 6892

Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6892

Author: Dermatology Department

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