

## Patient information

### Hand and Foot PUVA Systemic

Dermatology Department

#### **What is hand and foot PUVA?**

This is a treatment for various inflammatory skin diseases that affect hands and feet. It involves taking Psoralen tablets to make your skin sensitive to the effects of ultraviolet light. (Psoralen is a natural plant extract).

#### **What are the benefits of PUVA?**

The aim of PUVA is to improve your skin condition.

#### **What are the risks and side effects of PUVA?**

##### **Acute**

- Psoralen tablets can cause sickness and vomiting - if this happens there are alternatives.
- Some itching and 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**

## **Your treatment**

Treatment takes place twice weekly as an outpatient, and each course will last for about eight to twelve weeks.

Two hours after you have taken your Psoralen, your hands and feet are rested on Ultraviolet-A (UVA) panels with fluorescent lamps.

If the PUVA is tolerated, treatment times will increase during the course (from one minute to five minutes). If not tolerated then treatment will be either reduced or stopped.

## **Eye protection during PUVA**

Protective glasses should be worn during PUVA as your eyes are made more sensitive to the effects of light by the tablets. You must wear them from the time you take the Psoralen tablets until you go to bed on the two days each week you have PUVA.

## **Are there any alternative treatments?**

PUVA is usually offered as your skin is not responding to creams although tablet therapy can also be used in some cases.

## **What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?**

You can continue with your creams but your skin condition may worsen and you may require tablet therapy or admission to hospital

## **Advice during PUVA**

### **Do:**

- Tell your nurse if you are taking any new medications.
- Take Psoralen tablets with a light meal (avoid fatty food as this reduces absorption) two hours before UVA.
- Attend regularly and tell us if there is a problem attending e.g. holidays.

### **Do not:**

- Sunbathe or use sunbeds.
- Become pregnant during PUVA as psoralen has not been tested in pregnant women. If you do become pregnant please tell your doctor and nurse.
- Eat foods that contain natural psoralens (celery, parsnips, figs, limes and carrots) on the days you have your 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

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**Review date: February 2026**

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