



Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

PUVA Course

Department of Dermatology

THE PUVA COURSE

You are about to start a course of PUVA treatment. You will be prescribed Psoralen, a drug which makes the skin more sensitive to light. This is in tablet form which should be taken with a light meal two hours before each PUVA appointment. Two hours later, you receive ultraviolet-A (UVA) in a specially designed cabinet.

Treatment will take place twice weekly. The course takes a number of weeks, the exact length of the course depending on your response.

As the PUVA course proceeds, you will need to have a higher dose of UVA, and will therefore spend more minutes in the PUVA cabinet.

Goggles are provided and must be worn whilst in the cabinet. Whilst in the cabinet, male patients must protect their genitals by wearing either dark underpants or using a dark sock.

PUVA AND THE EYES

It is important that you wear UV blocking lenses on the days of your PUVA treatment. The glasses must be worn for 24 hours from the time you take your tablets (can be taken off for bed). This applies to all times of the year, including cloudy days, indoors and out.

PUVA AND NATURAL SUNLIGHT

The Psoralen tablets make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. You should avoid exposure to direct sunlight on treatment days by staying inside, avoiding direct sunlight

through car or house windows and protect the skin with suitable clothing when you do have to go outside. It is important that you do not sunbathe or use a sunbed during your course of PUVA since this could result in serious burning of your skin.

CONTRACEPTION

All women of child-bearing age must use an effective method of contraception. You should not become pregnant prior to or during PUVA treatment.

ALCOHOL

You should keep your alcohol intake to a minimum during the course of treatment and, if possible, avoid it altogether on treatment days.

COSMETICS/FRAGRANCES/MAKE-UP

Avoid perfumes, aftershaves and other cosmetics on the day of PUVA treatment as these could react with the light.

MEDICATION

Please inform PUVA staff of any other treatment you are taking – creams, tablets etc – especially if started during your PUVA treatments, as some drugs can make you more sensitive to the light treatment which could result in serious burning of your skin.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF PUVA

- Itching of the skin sometimes occurs.
- Dryness of the skin – responds to moisturising creams.

- Burning of the skin may occur if your skin is more sensitive than expected. If your skin becomes sore or uncomfortable after treatment, you should inform/contact the PUVA staff.
- Nausea after taking the tablets. If this gets unbearable, your Doctor may prescribe an anti-sickness tablet.
- Repeated courses of PUVA over the years may accelerate ageing of the skin, and in some cases is associated with the development of early skin cancer.
- For patients taking Psoralen tablets, there is a very slight risk of cataracts after prolonged treatment if UVA protective glasses are not worn after each treatment.

**PLEASE INFORM THE PUVA STAFF IF YOU NOTICE
ANY SIDE EFFECTS**

**Dermatology Department
Direct Line (01695) 656107**

It is important to attend regularly. We have learnt from experience that missed treatments slow the progress of response significantly. If you fail to attend for more than two consecutive sessions (one week) without informing the PUVA staff, your treatment will be discontinued and you will be discharged back to your Consultant/GP.

Help us to help you by attending follow-up appointments at the hospital clinics on the date and at the time shown on your appointment card. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend, please let us know

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9.00 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Wear UV blocking glasses for 24 hours from taking tablets.
- Avoid the use of creams, deodorant or perfume on the morning of the treatment.
- Inform clinic staff of any change in medication.
- Pregnancy must be avoided whilst on this treatment.

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Signs of sunburn type reaction.

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

Your own GP –

Dermatology Department – 01695 656107

Dermatology Secretaries – 01695 656665

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

Ormskirk & District General Hospital
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN
Tel: (01704) 547471

FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

We would welcome your feedback about your experience
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

Thank you

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