Bath PUVA

Introduction
This leaflet aims to provide you with information about your treatment. Please read the whole document so you are able to maximise the treatment as safely as possible. Please feel free to discuss any concerns or ask any questions with clinic staff.

What is Bath ‘PUVA’ Therapy?
PUVA is an acronym that stands for Psoralen with UVA light. Psoralen is liquid that is phototoxic. That is, it makes skin much more sensitive to light. A bath is prepared using Psoralen and involves soaking for 15 minutes. After absorption, it is ‘activated’ by UVA light given in a strictly monitored dose in the phototherapy clinic. Several different skin conditions can be treated effectively with PUVA.

What is Ultraviolet (UVA) Light?
Light is classified into many different wavelengths or parts. One part is known as ultraviolet light, which is a normal component of sunlight. Artificial light sources are available that produce ultraviolet ‘A’ (UVA).

Starting PUVA Therapy
Certain other medicines can make you more sensitive to PUVA treatment and some medical conditions can be aggravated by PUVA. Before starting therapy, be sure to tell Phototherapy staff, if any of the following apply, if you:

- Are using any creams or ointments or taking any medicines (this includes items prescribed or bought over the counter and herbal/natural preparations such as St. John’s Wort). We are happy to check that they are suitable to use alongside your PUVA treatment.

Please note that if you start taking any new medicines during your course of treatment, you must always report this to the Phototherapy staff, for your own safety

- Have had a severe reaction to Psoralen in the past
- Have had recent radiotherapy treatment or is any radiotherapy due to be given
- Have, or ever had, skin cancer
- Have any medical condition that requires you to stay out of the sun

**Before treatment**

Please do not use any ointments or creams, coal-tar products or perfumed soaps and toiletries on the day of treatment unless specifically asked to by the staff. (Do not use Coal-Tar preparations for at least 24 hours prior to PUVA).

This is because some perfumes and medicines contain chemicals which increase light sensitivity, and might lead to a sunburn effect following PUVA treatment. Once you have had your treatment you can usually then apply your ointments or creams. **Please note: The doctor and nurse will once again discuss the treatment and will ask you to sign a consent form for this treatment.**

**Following treatment**

Skin and lip protection. Do not expose skin to sunlight or sun lamps for 24 hours after treatment. Cover as much of your skin as possible with clothing (dark, closely woven fabrics are best) and avoid sitting near a window as UVA can pass through glass. You may be more sensitive to sunlight for 2 to 3 days. If you must be outside, please apply sunblock.

**How long will the treatment last?**

This course will last 8 to 10 weeks, but it may take several weeks before your skin condition improves. Please remember that it is important to attend regularly, for example: twice a week for the whole course.

**Are there problems associated with pregnancy or breast-feeding whilst having PUVA therapy?**

1. The effects of PUVA therapy on the unborn child are not known, so it is important that you use birth-control methods while having the treatment and for 1 month after finishing of the treatment. If you become pregnant, please inform clinic staff immediately.
2. Since it is not known whether Psoralen passes into mother’s milk, it is safer not to breast-feed whilst using this drug.

**What are the possible side-effects?**

You may experience slight reddening and/or itchiness of the skin during the 2 or 3 days following each treatment. More rarely tenderness or blistering of the skin can occur, but can be helped by products recommended by clinical staff, GP and referring Dermatologist or Pharmacist. It is important to contact your Phototherapy Department or GP, if any side effect is severe or bothers you at any stage.

**Are there any long term side effects?**

As with prolonged sun exposure there are potential consequences for the skin from PUVA. Premature ageing of the skin including some loss of elasticity may occur. For some patients there may be a slightly increased risk of developing one of the skin cancers (non-melanoma). However, we keep the number of treatments as low as possible to minimise this risk.

**Can I repeat this treatment?**

Yes. Patients have had this treatment repeated, but it is limited by the dose received from previous treatment(s) and is a decision to be made by the referring Dermatologist.

**Instructions for PUVA Bathing**

- Undress completely
- Put on approved eye protection (keep these on until out of the bath)
- Lower yourself gently into the prepared bath. Agitate the water gently from time to time but avoid splashing water over sides if possible (the bath will be quite full)
- Start the timer, setting it for 15 minutes
- Make sure your knees and shoulders are submerged. Use the disposable wipe provided to frequently swab with bath water, any other areas which need treatment but are not covered with bath water, such as shoulders and your upper chest. These areas must
have the same level of soaking as your submerged body in each session

- When the timer alerts you that you have soaked for 15 minutes, pull the plug out of bath and pat yourself dry with the towel provided
- Put on a dressing gown and the blue slippers and go immediately to the PUVA treatment room.

**What else should you know?**

- If you have any lesions or areas of skin that you wish to show the clinic staff please do so before having your Psoralen bath
- We recommend that you use a bland moisturiser (such as Diprobase) whilst you are undergoing PUVA therapy, to combat the possible drying effect of the treatment
- There are self-help groups for some of the conditions we treat, please ask for details
- **Always keep all drugs out of the reach of children**
- If you miss 3 appointments, we will assume that you no longer require PUVA therapy.

We must advise you that only persons having UV treatment are allowed to remain in the unit during treatment. Adults (unless the patient requires a carer) and especially children are not allowed to wait in the treatment areas.

**If you cannot attend, or you would like to discuss any aspect of your treatment, please ring the clinic on Tel: 0300 422 8349 (24 hour answerphone).**

**Contact information**

**Phototherapy Department**

Out Patients Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 03004228349

Monday to Friday, 6:30am to 2:00 pm