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Information**

# Narrowband UVB (TL-01) phototherapy

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about your narrowband UVB phototherapy treatment. Please read the whole document so you understand what is required from you to help make the treatment safe and effective.

## What is narrowband UVB phototherapy?

Phototherapy means treatment with light, which is a therapy that has been used for centuries by using the sun. Today, artificial sources of light (almost always ultraviolet lamps) are used to treat skin disorders. Light contains a wide range of wavelengths or parts. One part is ultraviolet B (UVB). The lamps used in narrowband UVB (TL-01) phototherapy produce a very limited range of UVB wavelengths. The advantage of this is that it avoids some of the undesirable burning effects which can happen in broadband treatments and sunlight.

## What should I do before UVB therapy?

Certain medicines can make you more sensitive to the UVB treatment and some medical conditions can be aggravated by UVB.

Before starting therapy, it is important to tell your doctor or the phototherapy staff, if you:

- are using any creams, 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 phototherapy 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 any ultraviolet therapy in the past.
- have had recent radiotherapy treatment or are planning any.

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- have, or ever had skin cancer.
- have, or ever had any eye problems such as cataracts or loss of the lens of the eyes.
- have, or ever had heart or blood pressure problems.
- have any medical condition that requires you to stay out of the sun.

Unless you are specifically asked to, please do not use any ointments, creams, coal-tar products or perfumed soaps and toiletries on the day of your treatment. Do not use 'coal-tar' preparations for at least 24 hours before your UVB therapy. This is because some perfumes and medicines contain chemicals which increase light sensitivity and might lead to a 'sunburn effect' following UVB treatment.

Once you have had your treatment you can apply your ointments or creams as normal.

Please note: The phototherapy staff will discuss the treatment with you and answer any questions that you may have. You will then be asked to sign a consent form.

## How can I protect myself from light during and after UVB therapy?

- Eye protection - it is important that you wear the protective close-fitting goggles that we have tested and approved, while in the UVB cabin. They will be provided in the clinic and must be worn while the lamps are on.
- Men may need to cover their genital area, as the skin in this area is thinner and more sensitive. Male patients should bring a dark sock with them, if this is not possible, alternatives will be discussed with you.
- You may be asked to wear a visor during the therapy.
- Do not expose your skin and lips to strong sunlight or sun lamps during your UVB therapy course. This is to avoid overdosing your skin with ultraviolet light. If you must be outside, please use sunblock.

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## **How long will treatment last?**

The course of whole-body treatment will range between 8 to 10 weeks, dependent on the hospital you are attending. If you have been offered hands and feet treatment this will range between 12 to 16 weeks. It may take several weeks before your skin condition improves. You may also need further courses of UVB treatment to keep the condition under control.

Please remember that it is important for you to attend promptly and regularly for your treatment.

## **Are there problems linked with pregnancy or breastfeeding while having UVB therapy?**

There is no known risk to an unborn child or breastfed baby from UVB therapy. However, we urge you to tell the phototherapy staff if you are planning a pregnancy or become pregnant as your skin sensitivity may change.

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

The most common side-effects of UVB therapy are mild itching and redness of the skin, similar to an overdose of the sun. Tenderness or blistering of the skin may happen on rare occasions but can be helped by products recommended by the clinic staff.

**Important: If any side-effect continues to bother you after 24 to 48 hours, please contact the Phototherapy Clinic (details are at the end of this leaflet). Out of normal working hours you should contact NHS 111 for advice.**

## **What are the risks of narrowband UVB therapy?**

As with prolonged sun exposure, the skin after UVB treatment can suffer from premature ageing including some loss of elasticity. For some patients there may be a slight increase in the risk of developing one of the skin cancers (non-melanoma). However, we keep the number of treatments as low as possible to reduce this risk.

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### What else should I know?

- Treatment times will be quite short to begin with, but will get longer as your course progresses. It is important that you are prepared to commit yourself to regular attendance over your course of treatment.
- We strongly recommend that you use a bland moisturiser such as Cetraben<sup>®</sup> cream.
- Remember that the treatment has been prescribed especially for **you** and **your** diagnosed condition. If you are prescribed or start using any over the counter medication during your course of treatment, it is essential that you let the phototherapy staff know. This will allow staff to check the suitability with UVB therapy.
- If you miss 2 appointments, we will assume that you no longer require UVB therapy and your referral letter will be returned to your GP/referring doctor.

There are self-help groups for some of the skin conditions we treat, please ask for details if you are interested.

We must advise you that only the patients having UVB therapy are allowed to stay in the clinic during the treatment session. Carers can stay with patients if needed. No other adults or children are allowed in the department.

**If you cannot attend your appointment or you would like to discuss any aspect of your treatment, please contact the Phototherapy Clinic.**

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## Contact information

### Phototherapy Clinic

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**NHS 111**

Tel: 111

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation
\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85