

PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a promising treatment modality which is being used to treat many different skin conditions, including actinic keratosis, sun damage, and acne. PDT combines the use of a topical medication (ALA) with light treatment. The ALA is first applied to the skin and is allowed to sit for about 90 minutes or more. ALA can be left on overnight, but this approach is more painful and is rarely used today. The skin is then treated with a light or laser, which activates ALA. The combined ALA/light treatment achieves the desired result in your skin.

What to bring with you on the day of treatment

- Wide brim hat and a scarf or bandana to wrap around your face underneath your hat
- If you have a history of cold sores (herpes) of your lips or face begin anti-viral treatment. If you do not have a prescription for anti-viral treatment (ex. Famvir, Valtrex, Acyclovir, etc.), please notify our office for a prescription.
- Something to do: during your treatment you will be sitting in our office for at least 90 minutes and are welcome to read a book, catch up on magazines and or anything else to entertain yourself.

What to expect *during* treatment

- Most patients experience some stinging during the laser or light treatment
- Expect to feel warmth especially in the more sun damaged areas of your skin

What to expect *after* treatment

- You absolutely must avoid exposure to direct visible light for the next 24 hours following treatment. You will be intensely sensitive to sunlight, artificial UV light and bright indoor lights for 24 hours after treatment. Sunscreen will not protect you against photosensitivity reactions.
- Plan on going straight home after your treatment and staying inside for the remainder of the day and for the entire next day.
- The warmth, redness and tingling that you experience during the laser or light treatment will last anywhere from 1 minute to 24 hours after treatment. You may apply a cold compress or ice or you can spray your face with cold water and sit under a fan after treatment to ease these symptoms.
- Starting the day of your treatment (day 1) and for two days afterwards (day 2 and 3) you may experience some swelling and redness in the area(s) treated.
- Starting day 3 and lasting as long as day 10, you will begin to flake and peel. This is normal and is what we expect and desire.
- You may wash the treated area(s) as normal with a gentle cleanser. It is recommended that any retinoid treatments be temporarily discontinued until after you have finished flaking and peeling. It is also recommended that you stay away from harsh cleansers and exfoliants, as your skin will be sensitive.
- You may use lotions and moisturizers as much as you desire to help ease the symptoms of dryness and flaking. If your skin becomes itchy after treatment you may use an over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream.
- We recommend repeating this treatment in 4 weeks or follow-up with your provider 4 weeks after treatment.

If you have any questions regarding your treatment, please feel call our office at 720-344-5252.