



0800 SKIN DR (0800 754 637)



## Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) 5-ALA Treatment

### What is PDT?

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a treatment for actinic keratosis - AKs (pre-cancerous lesions) on face and scalp. These rough scaly areas are caused by damage by sunlight and mean that you are more likely to get skin cancer in the future unless they are treated. It is a selective treatment. It only affects the damaged cells and after exposure to light destroys the cancer cells.

### How does it work?

A photosensitizing agent is applied to the skin for 1-3 hours followed by exposure to a light source. This activates the photosensitizing agent which is selectively absorbed into the abnormal cells, destroying the cancer cells.

### What does PDT do?

PDT reduces the number of pre-cancerous lesions and early cancerous lesions by 81-91%. It also improves the skin complexion. Usually 1-3 treatments are needed to achieve adequate results. Patients are required to have regular visits to a skin doctor after treatment, so any residual sun damage can be treated.

### Who is suitable for PDT treatment?

Your Doctor will determine if this is the most appropriate treatment for your condition. It is best suited for patients with widespread precancerous skin lesions or where shorter downtimes related to treatment effects is preferred. You will then need to have a consultation with a Nurse before going ahead with the PDT treatment. The Nurse will discuss the treatment, procedure, consent, aftercare instructions and take photographs. A biopsy may be required. Your treatment will **not** take place on the same day as your consultation.

### Who should not have PDT treatment?

You should not have treatment if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

### What can you expect following treatment?

The treatment area typically becomes red and swollen. Moderate to severe stinging, and/or a burning sensation at the time of treatment is common. The sensation is similar to that of bad sunburn. The first 24-48 hours are the worst, so allow for down-time from work and other activities during this period. Formation of blisters and pustules are less common. Mild to severe flaking/peeling of the skin follows, this usually subsides in 7-10 days. Reactions vary between individuals; however, expect 1-2 weeks of healing time. In some rare cases the pain is quite severe during the first 48 hours, please contact the clinic with any concerns.

### What should I do after my treatment?

- Cleanse with a mild gentle cleanser morning and night and gently pat skin dry
- Avoid any exposure to sunlight for the first 48 hours as it may cause severe blister burns.
- Steroid cream may be prescribed to mix with paraffin or non-perfumed oil or ointment which needs to be applied morning and night to keep the area moist
- You should regularly use sunscreen for about 4 weeks even if cloudy
- Apply cool packs/ice to the treated area if needed for pain relief
- Avoid excessive heat exposure such as sauna hot showers and steam rooms for 24-48 hours after PDT
- You may be given a prescription for an anti-viral drug and/or sleeping tablets if required
- Regular paracetamol or codeine can be taken if required for pain

Contact the clinic with any concerns or questions. A Nurse may phone you 1-2 days after treatment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> PDT treatment is done 4 weeks later. A follow up consultation with the Doctor is booked for 1 month after the 2<sup>nd</sup> PDT treatment.

**If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the clinic on: 0800 SKIN DR (0800 754 637)**

**or Emergency After Clinic Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Initials