

Daylight Photodynamic Therapy with 5-aminolaevulinic acid nanoemulsion gel

Patient Information Leaflet

Dear Patient

This leaflet aims to provide you with information on what you might experience and how to care for your skin, particularly the treatment site, following Daylight Photodynamic Therapy (PDT).

What is actinic keratosis?

Actinic Keratosis or AK is areas of skin that have been damaged by the sun over time. The cells in this area grow more quickly than in normal cells and while many may come and go over time, a number have the potential to develop into skin cancer. Therefore, it is important to treat these lesions. In addition, while some AKs appear as rough or scaly patches on the skin it is quite possible that a few other non-visible areas of sun damage may exist around these lesions. For this reason, your clinician may have suggested treating a wider area or the 'field' as they may call it.

What is daylight photodynamic therapy?

This is a treatment for individual AKs or fields of solar damage. It involves the application of a photosensitising gel and the use of daylight to activate this gel.

The gel starts a process in the damaged cells which helps destroy them while leaving the healthy skin intact.

What do I need to do before my appointment?

Your doctor or nurse may ask you to apply a moisturiser daily for the week before your appointment to the affected area to soften any crusts/scales on your skin.

What can I expect on the day of treatment?

When you arrive at the clinic, one of the team will explain the procedure and ask for your consent to the treatment.

The first step will be to apply sunscreen to the area to be treated as well as other exposed areas. It is important to avoid further sun damage, but the sunscreen must not contain any physical sun blocks, titanium dioxide for example, which would interfere with the reaction after the gel is applied.

The area will be cleaned with an alcohol wipe then any remaining crusts/scales will be gently removed. The photosensitising gel will be applied in a thin layer over the area/lesions.

You will then be asked to go outside within the next 30 minutes and stay in full daylight for the following 2 hours. Many clinics have a garden or courtyard where you can sit, but as long as you remain in daylight, the choice is up to you. Remember you don't need full sun, just light, so taking some shelter, in light shade, if it's too hot, is fine. Bring along some music or something to read. The staff will give you more information on an area that might be suitable and what time to be back.

During the treatment, you may experience some tingling in the treatment areas. This is normal and part of the treatment process.

After 2 hours, any excess gel should be removed, and the treated area should be covered.

Please avoid sun exposure on the treated lesion sites and surrounding skin for approximately 48 hours following treatment. You could cover the treated area with a dressing or an article of clothing (e.g., a hat).

The team will provide you with some more detailed information on aftercare.

What happens next

You can also expect the area to be inflamed and crusty for up to two weeks while the damaged cells are shed and replaced with new healthy ones.

Your doctor will normally ask to see you again in around 3 months to assess the results and decide if further treatment is needed.