



Photodynamic Therapy/PDT with Levulan WHAT TO EXPECT FROM TREATMENT & POST CARE INFORMATION

WHAT IS PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY/PDT?

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a special treatment performed with a topical photosensitizing agent called Levulan (5-aminolevulinic acid or ALA) that is activated with the correct wavelength of light. This treatment is approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to remove sun damaged pre-cancerous zones and spots called actinic keratosis. All other uses of this therapy are considered "off label" uses. Sun damage, fine lines, and blotchy pigmentation are also improved because of the positive effect of Levulan and the light treatment. ALA/PDT treatment also has the unique ability to minimize pores and reduce oil glands, effectively treating stubborn acne vulgaris, acne rosacea, and improve the appearance of some acne scars.

HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN I EXPECT?

Patients with severe sun damaged skin manifested by actinic keratosis, texture, and tone changes including mottled pigmentation and skin laxity may see excellent results. You may also see improvement of large pores and pitted acne scars. Active acne can improve dramatically.

HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL IT TAKE?

To achieve maximum improvement of pre-cancerous (actinic keratosis) sun damage, skin tone and texture, a series of two treatments for actinic keratoses and two to four treatments for acne are most effective. Some patients with only actinic keratosis are happy with just one treatment. More treatments can be done at periodic intervals in the future to maintain the clearance of the actinic keratoses and the rejuvenated appearance of the skin.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

PDT causes the skin to have a sun burn like reaction. Following PDT, the treated areas can appear red with crusting which is followed by peeling for 2-7 days. Some patients have an exuberant response to PDT, and experience marked redness of their skin for a couple of weeks. Less commonly temporary swelling of the lips and around your eyes can occur for a few days. Darker pigmented patches called lentigines (commonly known as Liver Spots) can become temporarily darker and then peel off leaving normal skin. (This usually occurs over seven to ten days.)

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

1. Easier for patients than repeated applications of topical products and a shorter recovery period.
2. It is often less painful than cryotherapy.
3. Reduced scarring and improved cosmetic outcome compared with cautery, surgery and liquid nitrogen.
4. Levulan treats visible and subclinical lesions-also referred to as a field treatment.
5. It may improve the appearance of photoaging with decreased sebaceous hyperplasia (oil glands), minimize pore size and improved facial color, texture and tone.



DOES INSURANCE COVER MY PROCEDURE?

This procedure is covered by Medicare/Medicaid and the majority of insurance companies. A small co-pay for private insurance may apply.

TREATMENT STEPS:

1. Patients who have a history of recurring **cold sores** (Herpes simplex type I) or a history of **herpes zoster (shingles)** in the treatment area will be started on a prescription antiviral medication on the day of the treatment.
2. Make sure your skin is clean and free of all makeup, moisturizers, and sunscreens. Bring a hat, sunglasses, and scarf when appropriate to the clinic. If treating a body area, sun protective clothing may be appropriate.
3. Photography may be done by the staff before the Levulan is applied.
4. A consent form is required. You cannot be pregnant or breastfeeding.
5. An acetone scrub is performed. This will enhance the absorption of the Levulan and to give much more even uptake.
6. Levulan is applied topically to the whole area/zone to be treated (such as the whole face, back of the hands, extensor part of the forearms).
7. The Levulan is left on for 30-90 minutes before any light treatment is performed. Please bring a book, magazine or other activity to help pass the time.
8. The Levulan is activated with a unique spectrum of light. During this time you will be given a cool cloth and a device that blows cool air to make you as comfortable as possible. Most patients will experience a sensation that ranges from tingling to burning and stinging.

POST CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DAYS 1 – 7:

DAY 1 & 2

- **Stay out of the sun for 24-48 hours!! Apply SPF 30+ that contains a physical blocker such as zinc or titanium oxide.**
Burning and stinging are normal, keep skin cool and moist.
- Suggested methods for cooling/comfort – spray/mist with cool spring water, freezer bags of peas or corn, ice packs, damp washcloths from freezer or refrigerated aloe gel
- You may take Ibuprofen/Tylenol for pain and swelling.
- You may apply over the counter hydrocortisone ointment for redness or swelling .
- You may take Benadryl to help you sleep.
- When using a computer, cover face with a mask for the first 24-48 hours.

DAY 3-7

- After 24-48 hours the heat/warm sensation will drop
- Cleanse with mild cleansers such as Cetaphil or EltaMD Foaming Cleanser
- Moisturize with Aquaphor or Cetaphil or Cer Ve cream to alleviate tightness or peeling.
- Apply SPF 30+ morning and evening. We would be happy to make recommendations.