



Front Range Dermatology Associates is now using Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) to treat Actinic Keratoses.

While I was in the military, we were trained to manage diffuse actinic damage with a field treatment rather than freezing multiple spots. The goal of a field treatment is to treat all clinically visible as well as subclinical actinic keratoses within the treatment area. I discuss the various field treatment options with my patients to include 5-fluorouracil, imiquimod, diclofenec and ingenol mebutate but patients are often hesitant due to side effects, cost or long treatment regimens of these topical medications. In 2004 I started to doing Photodynamic Therapy (PDT), which offered the advantage of an in office treatment, similar effectiveness and less down time. Due to the impact it has made on patients lives, I have started a PDT treatment program wherever I have practiced dermatology and I am happy to offer it to patients in Greeley.

WHAT IS PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY/PDT?

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a treatment approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for actinic keratoses. Levulan (5-aminolevulinic acid) is applied to the skin and converted to protoporphyrin IX rapidly by the proliferating cells of actinic keratoses. Photoactivation of this compound leads to the generation of reactive oxygen intermediates and a net necrosis and apoptosis of the target cells.

HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN PATIENTS EXPECT?

"Photodynamic therapy is well tolerated, has excellent cosmetic results, and has reported cure rates between 69 and 93 percent" *Am Fam Physician.* 2007 Sep 1;76(5):667-671

I usually tell patients they will get a 70% improvement after one treatment and over 90% with two treatments. These numbers are for the face and it is a little lower for scalps.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

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 - like a bad sunburn, 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.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

1. 100% compliance. In 8 years of using PDT I have never had a patient not complete the treatment compared to use of topical products.
2. It is often less painful than cryotherapy and has lower risk of scarring and dispigmentation.
3. Treats visible and subclinical lesions.
4. In several studies, PDT has been preferred by many patients for ease of use and rapid recovery as compared to alternative treatments including freezing and topical fluorouracil (Efudex).
5. Covered by Medicare/Medicaid.





Copyright 2014. Front Range Dermatology. All Rights Reserved.