



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Narrow Band UVB Treatment

Information for patients

Narrow band UVB therapy is a treatment where the skin is exposed to specific wavelengths of type B ultraviolet light. This wavelength is part of the types of ultraviolet rays given off by the sun.

This is mainly used to treat psoriasis and eczema as these conditions are caused by overactive immune cells in the skin and the light reduces the activity of the cells. It can also be used to treat other skin conditions such as polymorphic light eruption, pruritus, lichen planus, mycosis fungoides and vitiligo.

Treatment is usually given to the whole body but patients can have treatment just to the hands and feet or a combination of both.

This form of treatment can be safely used during pregnancy.

What does the treatment involve?

The therapy is carried out in hospital under medical supervision. You will usually have to attend hospital three times per week during the course of treatment. The length of the course will vary from one patient to another; an average for psoriasis would be nine weeks. The time of exposure for your first treatment is based on your skin's reaction to test doses on a small area of your skin. The test reaction is read 24 hours later. After that, increasing doses will be given at each visit, depending on the reaction of your skin.

You will usually need to wear goggles or a visor to protect your eyes during exposure to light. If you decide not to wear protective goggles as your eyelids require treatment, **you must keep your eyes completely closed** during the treatment in the light cubicle.

For the phototherapy to be effective, you must also use the topical skin treatment (creams and ointments) as advised by the supervising doctor. You should tell the doctor or nursing staff about any medication you are taking for other reasons, or any changes during the course of treatment as some medications can make your skin more sensitive to light.

Things to avoid

Throughout the course of treatment, you should not sunbathe or use a sunbed at any time. On the days of treatment you should also avoid significant exposure of the skin to direct sunlight.

Avoid putting cosmetics, perfumed substances or aftershave lotion on your skin before treatment as these may make your skin more sensitive to ultraviolet light. This can result in patchy discoloration of the skin which can take many months to fade.

All alcohol must be avoided before treatment.

What are the possible side-effects?

Occasionally, side-effects occur as a result of treatment. These include:

- A sunburn type reaction (particularly in patients with a pale complexion). If you develop excessive discomfort or redness of the skin following treatment, please contact the nursing staff by telephoning **0113 392 4349**.
- Skin dryness and itch (this can be helped by the liberal use of moisturising creams).
- Very occasionally patients can develop polymorphic light eruption, which is an itchy rash usually triggered by sunlight.
- Some patients can also occasionally develop a rash called folliculitis (inflammation around hair follicles).
- As with too much sun exposure, long term use of UVB (over many years) may age your skin and increase your risk of developing skin cancer. This risk is very slight at first, but increases significantly after about 500 treatments. For this reason we do not usually recommend a course of treatment more often than once a year.
- If you do not wear the protective goggles/visor/close your eyes, you risk developing a sun burn type reaction to your eyes after treatment and may also increase your risk of developing cataracts in the future.
- If you have a history of cold sores which are triggered by sun, these can also be triggered by UVB.

Practical points

- **On no account** should the close fitting goggles or visor supplied to you be removed during treatment.
- It is important that you use moisturising creams and any other topical treatments you are prescribed throughout the course of treatment. If you have any query about this, please ask the doctor or a member of the nursing staff.
- We will give you specific instructions on how to position yourself whilst having treatment in our whole body cabinet or on the hand/foot canopy. This is to ensure all of your skin is exposed evenly each time as, if an area of skin which has previously been covered, is exposed to UVB treatment, it may burn.
- In general, no clothing is worn whilst undergoing treatment in the light cubicle (except for male patients who must wear genital protection).

For treatment to be effective, it is essential to attend regularly. If you are unable to attend for treatment, you or a relative should telephone the department and speak to the nursing staff, giving a reason for cancelling.

Telephone: **0113 392 4349**

If you fail to attend for more than two treatments without contacting us, your treatment time will be given to another patient and you will be referred back to your GP or consultant.

Valuables

All your valuables are your own responsibility.

Storage of results

We record the information about your treatment in an anonymised form on a secure database for audit purposes in accordance with good medical practice. The anonymised data may also be used for research.

To help the smooth running of the unit and our endeavour to give a high standard of care, we would appreciate your co-operation with the above points.



What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft

Your views matter



© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 4th edition (Ver 1)
Developed by: Dr Victoria Goulden, Consultant Dermatologist
Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code:20230213_002/EP

LN000122
Publication date
03/2023
Review date
03/2026