

## **PDT (Photodynamic Light Therapy) Patient Guide**

### **What is photodynamic therapy?**

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a special treatment performed with a topical photosensitizing agent called levulan 5-aminolevulinic acid (ALA), activated with the correct wavelength of light. This is also known as ALA-PDT treatment. These treatments remove sun-damaged precancerous zones and spots called actinic keratoses. Sun damage, fine lines and blotchy pigmentation are also improved because of the positive effect of levulan and the light treatment. ALA-PDT treatment has the unique ability to minimize pores and reduce oil glands, effectively treating stubborn acne, rosacea and improving 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 see the 'best results'?**

To achieve maximum improvement of precancerous (actinic keratoses) sun damage, skin tone and texture, a series of 2-3 treatments 2-4 weeks apart is most effective. Some patients with just actinic keratoses are happy with one treatment. More treatments can be done at periodic intervals in the future to maintain the rejuvenated appearance of the skin

### **What are the disadvantages?**

Following PDT, the treated areas can appear red with some peeling for 2-7 days. Patients should avoid exposure of the photosensitized areas to sunlight or prolonged/intense light for remainder of treatment day and FULL following day. Some patients have an exuberant response to PDT and experience marked redness of their skin. Temporary swelling of the lips and around the eyes may occur for a few days. Darker pigmented patches, 'sun spots', can become temporarily darker and then peel off leaving normal skin (this usually occurs over 7-10 days). Repeat treatments may be necessary as medicine is not an exact science.

### **What are the advantages?**

- Easier for patients than repeated topical liquid nitrogen, Efudex (5-fluoruracil) or Aldara because the side effects are minimal, rapid healing and only 1-3 treatments required
- The ALA-PDT treatment at our clinic is much less painful than liquid nitrogen, 5-FU and Aldara
- Reduced scarring and improved cosmetic outcome compared with cautery, surgery and Efudex, liquid nitrogen can leave white spots on the skin
- Levulan improves the whole facial area treated, creating one color, texture and tone, rather than just spot treating with liquid nitrogen, cautery and surgery

In summary, PDT matches the 'ideal treatment' for actinic damage:

- Well tolerated (essentially painless)
- Easily performed by a specialty clinic environment
- Noninvasive (no needles or surgery required)
- Excellent cosmetic outcome (particularly in cosmetic sensitive areas of the face)

PLEASE EXPECT TO BE HERE FOR 80 MIN FOR CLEANING AND TREATMENT TIME

