Integricare
DERMATOLOGY
YOUR SKIN, OUR JOURNEY

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Photodynamic Therapy (PDT): Patient Information & Instructions:

What is PDT?

- A treatment for:
  - Superficial basal cell carcinoma.
  - Pre-cancerous sun-damaged skin: actinic keratoses and extensive sun damaged skin.
  - Bowen's disease.
- Involves applying a photosensitising cream activated by a light (red light wavelength 630-635nm or blue light, less common, 400-417 nm) causing oxidisation and subsequent destruction of abnormal skin cells.

Common Photosensitising Creams:

- 5-ALA (Aminolevulinic Acid 20%)
- MAL (Methyl aminolevulinate 16%)

Types of PDT:

1. Conventional PDT:

- Loose skin crusts are removed first.
- Cream applied → covered for ~3 hours.
- Cream wiped off → area exposed to red light for 10–15 minutes.
- Area dressed and covered for at least 2 days post-treatment.

2. Daylight PDT:

- Suitable when temperature >10°C and outdoors is comfortable.
- Sunscreen applied 15 minutes prior, a SPF 50+ broad spectrum without titanium oxide, zinc oxide or coloured tints (including the treatment area).
- Loose scale/crusts removed → cream applied.
- Go outdoors within 30 minutes of cream application.
- Stay outdoors in natural daylight for 2 hours (this can be under cover or shaded areas).
- Area cleaned → covered for remainder of day.

Aftercare Instructions:

- Gently wash treated area once dressing is removed.
- Avoid rubbing; pat dry.
- Scabs and crusts form in days, heals over weeks.
- Avoid scratching or picking.
- Apply Vaseline or preferred emollient daily for 3 days or as needed.
- Use SPF 50+ sunscreen for 48 hours after.
- Avoid swimming until fully healed.
- Silicone scar gels may be utilised daily until healed.

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Precautions: When PDT may not be Suitable:

- Pregnancy.
- Peanut allergy (some creams contain peanut oil).
- Lupus, porphyria or any light-sensitive conditions.

Things to Avoid:

- Avoid wetting dressings in the shower.
- No swimming until healing is complete.
- Avoid sunlight for 24 hours post-treatment.
- Go straight home after procedure and stay indoors.

Possible Side Effects:

Short-Term:

- **Common:**
  - Pain during light exposure (may need breaks, pain relieving interventions or anaesthetic).
  - Redness, swelling, crusting, peeling.
  - Itching and discomfort lasting days.
- **Uncommon:**
  - Blistering, ulceration.
  - Bruising.
  - Dermatitis or allergic reaction.
  - Infection (red, swollen, painful – seek medical advice).

Long-Term:

- **Uncommon:**
  - Scarring.
  - Skin colour changes (unresolving redness, lightening or darkening).
  - Treatment failure or recurrence (may need repeat or alternative treatment).

Expected Healing Timeline:

1. Redness appears like sunburn within 24 hours.
2. Peeling or scabbing over the week is common.
3. Blisters / scabbing indicate a strong (normal) reaction.
4. Swelling (especially face) can last up to 5 days.
5. Redness and scabbing resolve over 2–3 weeks.
6. Mild redness may persist for weeks to months.
7. Do not pick at blisters or scabs.