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Photodynamic Therapy Patient Guideline

Photodynamic Therapy is for the treatment of Actinic Keratosis. During the treatment you might experience a slight burning, tingling or stinging sensation that should only last while you are being exposed to the light source. After you have undergone photodynamic therapy, you may experience redness, dryness, crusting and peeling.

Patients must be off of Accutane (Isotretinoin) for a minimum of 6 months prior to treatment. All Retin-A (prescription or OTC Retinol) products, AHA/BHA's (exfoliants) or Anti-aging creams are to be discontinued 3-4 days prior to treatment and throughout the healing process. If you are unsure what may be in your facial products, please call our office and speak with the light department. For patients who are having their face or scalp treatments, please bring a broad brimmed hat to your appointment. Patients who are treating the arms and legs, please wear clothing that will cover and protect from sun light.

Application aminolevulinic acid chemical:

Women: Come with clean and make-up free face.

Men: Come with clean and shaved face. Please shave the day before treatment to avoid any additional irritation.

1. The day of your Photodynamic Therapy appointment, you will come into the office and check in like you normally would for an office visit. You will be directed to a sub-waiting room until the Medical Assistant is ready for you.
2. Once in the room, we will cleanse the face followed by the application of an aminolevulinic acid chemical.
3. After the application of the aminolevulinic acid chemical, you are to incubate for 1-2 hours for face/scalp or 3 hours for chest/arms/legs in our sub-waiting rooms.
4. While you are waiting, we recommend staying indoors. Please bring something to occupy your time. If you need to step outside please protect the treated areas from direct sunlight.

Blue Light treatment:

1. During the light treatment you may experience slight burning or stinging sensation that should only last while you are being exposed to the light source. You may take Tylenol or Motrin an hour before your treatment.
2. You will be given protective eyewear that you must wear during the light treatment.
3. You will be provided with a hand held cooling device as well as a spray bottle with cool water during the treatment that will relieve any intense sensations during the treatment.
4. The light treatment will last 15-17 minutes. Once the light is off, the burning or stinging sensation will subside.
5. After the treatment we will wash your face with a gentle cleanser, apply sunscreen and discuss your post care instructions.

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Photodynamic Therapy Post Care Instructions

What to expect:

Within 24 hours of treatment you may experience redness and swelling, to the degree of a “bad sunburn.” Exposure to sunlight may increase the sensitivity and may cause more irritation or swelling. The skin may feel tight or dry and you may peel like a typical sunburn. Do not pick, scratch or pull loose skin, this may lead to unwanted scarring. For patients that have been treated on the face, please avoid any make up or other daily facial products until the treated areas have completed its peeling process. For all locations please only use the products suggested below. The treated areas will take at least 5-7 days to heal.

Post Care Instructions:

1. It is mandatory to avoid direct sunlight, examination lights, tanning booths, dental examination lamps, etc. for 48 hours after your photodynamic therapy treatment. It is strongly recommended to avoid excessive sun exposure for at least 7 days after treatment due to sun sensitivity.
2. For the first 48-72 hours you may experience intense burning or stinging. You may use Vinegar Soaks or Milk Soaks to help alleviate these sensations. If you are able to tolerate the burning and stinging, there is no need to use these soaks listed below:
 - a. Vinegar Soaks: Mix 1/4 cup of white vinegar to a quart of filtered or distilled water. Use disposable gauze or a soft towel to gently pat or lay onto affected areas until your skin is relieved. You may need to repeat soaks several times until burning or stinging subsides for the next 48-72 hours. Store remaining solution in the refrigerator.
 - b. Milk soaks: Use clean gauze to gentle pat or lay onto affected for about 5 minutes to soothe and calm the treated area. You may need to repeat soaks several times until burning or stinging subsides for the next 48-72 hours.
 - c. You may also use an ice pack to alleviate any burning or stinging as well as swelling.
3. To cleanse the treated area, please use gentle products like Cetaphil or CeraVe cleansers. Cleanse the treated areas after each Vinegar or Milk soak and follow with Aquaphor ointment, Aloe Vera or a facial moisturizer with SPF.
 - a. Other products you may use: Aveeno Skin Relief Ointment/Cream, Cetaphil Cream, CeraVe Cream and/or Eucerin cream based products.
4. After the first 48-72 hours, you may return to normal outdoor activities as long as a facial moisturize with an spf of 30 or higher is reapplied every 2 hours and a broad brimmed hat is utilized to avoid any direct sunlight to treated areas.

~Please ask us about our Restorative Kits and brush on sunscreens sold at Marietta Facial Plastics Center~

Please call Marietta Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center with any questions or concerns at:
770-422-1013, ext. 1029 Brittany or ext. 1030 Ginger.