Psoralen Tablets  
(Methoxypsoralen)

This leaflet is available in large print and audit version - call 0800 0730510

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यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज अपनी भाषा में बांटने की तो पंजाब इन्फरमेशन केन्द्र-आरडीटेक्ट को टेलीफोन नंबर 0800 0730510 पर फोन करें।

अगर आपको यह पत्र अपनी भाषा में शेयर करना है, तो फोन करें इन्फरमेशन केन्द्र-आरडीटेक्ट को 0800 0730510 पर संपर्क करें।

आपनी फोन यहाँ है एक बुध नामक आरा निजी भाषा जोता चाँद, ताहले दया करें पेशेवर इन्फरमेशन केन्द्र-आरडीटेक्ट को संपर्क करें।

0800 0730510

अगर कोई अंकित की वर्णन त्रुटि या नोटिफिकेशन है, फोन 0800 0730510 पर संपर्क करें।

Information Co-ordinator
Psoralen (Methoxypsoralen) Tablets

This information is intended to provide you with information about your treatment and should be read thoroughly so that you are aware of the requirement on your part to ensure the effectiveness and safety of the therapy.

What is PUVA (Psoralen + UVA light) therapy?

PUVA stands for the use of Psoralen drug in combination with UVA light. Psoralen makes the skin much more sensitive to light. Several different skin diseases have been treated effectively with PUVA.

What is UVA Light?

Light is classified into many different wavelengths or parts. One part is known as Ultraviolet light a normal component of sunlight. Artificial sources are now available that produce Ultraviolet A, UVA.

How PUVA is given

Light exposure takes place in a specially designed cubicle containing fluorescent tubes.

Before each treatment a qualified nurse will assess your skin. The cubicle is behind curtains and there is a changing area for your use. Underwear can be left on whilst the nurse is checking your skin. Before your treatment you will need to remove your underwear in the cubicle (see notes 6 & 7 in precautions to take), then stand in the centre of the cubicle with the door closed. The Doctor will determine the start dose of light that you will receive. Your treatment time in the machine will increase as your skin accepts the light exposure. There will be a trained nurse in attendance for every session. We will provide you with protective goggles to wear in the cubicle to protect your eyes from the UV light. In rare cases we may need to treat your eyelids in which case you will need to keep your eyes closed in the cubicle at all times.

If you experience any tingling or heat from your skin, this is to be expected. A nurse will discuss and assess your skin prior to each treatment.
Benefits

After a certain amount of treatments you may expect that your skin might show signs of improvement such as psoriatic skin paling, less scaling, less itching, less raised areas of skin. It may take several sessions before an improvement is seen. Vitiligo skin may start to show signs of repigmentation such as small areas of darkened skin within the areas of Vitiligo appearing. We would expect your white areas of skin to go pink. This is a natural reaction and if you have this reaction, you should inform the nurse in charge of your treatment when you next see them.

Our aim is to improve your skin so that it is better than when you first started the course of light therapy hopefully achieving clearance though sometimes this may not happen.

Appointments

You will be expected to attend the Dermatology Department twice weekly for your PUVA therapy. This will be on Monday and Thursday. It is important that you try not to miss any treatments. If you are unable to attend any of your treatments, during your course of light therapy, then please telephone the Dermatology Department on the Direct Line Number at the bottom of this leaflet, so that your treatment can be rescheduled. If you do not attend for 2 treatments, without letting the Department know, then we will presume that you no longer require the light therapy, discontinue your treatment, discharge you from the light therapy clinic and inform your GP.

What should you do before PUVA therapy?

Certain other medicines can make you more sensitive to the PUVA treatment. Some medical conditions can be aggravated by PUVA, therefore before starting therapy, be sure to tell your Doctor if you:

1. Have had a severe reaction to PUVA in the past.
2. Have had recent radiotherapy treatment or are planning any, this does not mean x-rays for diagnosis.
3. Ever had, skin cancer.
4. Ever had, any eye problems such as cataracts or loss of the lens of the eyes.
5. Have, or ever had, liver problems.
6. Ever had, heart or blood pressure problems.
7. Have any medical condition that requires you to stay out of the sun.
8. Are taking ANY medicines, either prescription or bought over the counter. We are happy to check that they are suitable to use in conjunction with your PUVA treatment. Please inform nursing staff of any new medication you have taken.

9. Please do not use any ointments, creams or Coal Tar preparations for at least 24 hours prior to PUVA. This is because some medicines contain chemicals, which increase light sensitivity, and might lead to a ‘sunburn effect’ following PUVA treatment. Therefore one hour after you have had your treatment you can apply your ointments or creams.

How should you take your Psoralen Tablets?

1. The number of tablets recommended by your Dermatologist should be taken with food or milk, two hours before PUVA, unless otherwise directed.
2. Puwasoralen is a potent drug. Never take more than is prescribed for you as it may result in burning and / or blistering of your skin after exposure to ultraviolet light.
3. During your course of treatment, please ensure that you give the staff at the department 4 working days notice to obtain repeat supplies of your Psoralen tablets. If you do not give us this information then you will not be able to have treatment on your next light therapy appointment.
4. Treatment cannot be given if you have forgotten to take your Psoralen tablets.

Precautions to take

Before starting and during the whole UVA course you should: -

1. Immediately before treatments avoid any perfumes, aftershave, deodorants or other cosmetics and toiletries as they may make your skin even more sensitive to the ultraviolet light.
2. Ensure your skin is clean and dry by having a plain shower before your treatment.
3. Avoid any other form of artificial ultra violet treatment or relaxation e.g. solarium or sun bed.
5. Inform the doctors about pills, creams or ointments that may have been prescribed elsewhere.
6. Male patients should either wear a thong or a sock and an elastic band, whilst in the cabinet, to cover the genitals, because the skin is thin in this area and is at risk of burning.
7. Female patients should remove all underwear when in the cabinet. If you need to leave underwear on during menstruation, please speak to trained nurse in clinic.
8. No severe haircuts during course of treatment please.
9. Long hair should be tied up.

What special precautions should you take?

1. Eye protection is VERY important. UV400 standard eye protection must be worn for 24 hours from time of taking your Psoralen tablets; these can be purchased from local chemists. If eye protection is not worn, permanent damage to your eyes may occur i.e. cataract formation. Be mindful that sunlight, daylight, neon light without diffusers and even light through a window can cause the above to happen, therefore sunglasses should be worn when indoors.
2. Skin and lip protection. Do not expose skin and lips to sunlight or sun lamps for 24 hours after taking the tablets, as you will be more sensitive to sunlight during this period. Avoid sitting near a window as UVA can pass through glass.
3. In sunny conditions use a sun block / high SPF sunscreen, SPF 25 or greater, on all light exposed areas of the skin following your treatment.
4. If your face is unaffected by your skin condition and / or your face is protected during treatment then apply a sun block / high SPF sunscreen after taking the Psoralen tablets.
5. Please make sure all areas of skin are covered e.g. by wearing long sleeved clothing, gloves, enclosed shoes and a wide brimmed hat to protect your skin and head on treatment days. There is a very real risk of burning from the sun, due to your skin being sensitive to the sun’s rays.

Protective goggles

Protective goggles should always be worn whilst receiving your light dose in the cabinet. These will be provided by the Dermatology Department. Please use the goggles provided to protect your eyes from the UVA light. You should not remove the protective goggles whilst in the cubicle, unless specifically asked to do so. If the protective goggles are not worn, and your eyes remain open, the eyes can suffer serious damage such as development of cataracts.

How long will the course of therapy last?

It may take several weeks before your skin condition improves. An average course of light therapy may last longer than 8 weeks. Please remember that it is important to attend regularly.
Are there any problems associated with pregnancy or breastfeeding whilst having PUVA therapy?

1. Birth control methods should be used because the effects of PUVA therapy on the unborn child are not known. If you become pregnant, inform your Doctor or nursing staff immediately.
2. Since it is not known whether Psoralen passes into mother’s milk, it is safer not to breastfeed whilst having this treatment.

What are the possible side effects?

1. The most common side effects of PUVA therapy are nausea, itching and redness of the skin. Taking the drug with food or milk may prevent the nausea. If nausea persists please inform the nurse in clinic.
2. Tenderness or blistering of the skin may occur, but can be helped by products recommended by your Dermatologist or nursing staff.
3. Less frequent side effects include depression, dizziness, headaches, swelling or rashes.
4. Your skin may become red, similar to the redness caused by sunburn. This is treated by liberally applying after sun lotion and plenty of moisturisers to the affected areas.
5. After a number of treatments PUVA can lead to the tanning of the skin. Although the skin appears well tanned it may occasionally remain very sensitive to natural sunlight and burn easily on sun-exposure. The tan will fade over a period of about two months on completion of treatment.
6. Long-term use of PUVA may include an acceleration of skin ‘ageing,’ this includes an increase in freckles, wrinkling and dryness of the skin. So we will ask you to liberally apply any moisturiser, which has been suggested by your Dermatologist, one hour after you have received your light dose.
7. There is a very slight increase in the chance of developing skin cancer later in life. This risk occurs after many treatments. If you notice any changes in your skin, both during and after your treatment, please inform the nursing staff. These changes can include a lump, an ulcer, a persistent crust or scab, colour change and growth of an existing mole over a short period of time.

Important

Contact your doctor or the PUVA nursing team if any side effects continue to bother you after 24 – 48 hours.
What else should you know?

1. Remember to take Psoralen as directed by your Dermatologist. If you forget to take the drug before your scheduled treatment, telephone the Dermatology Department for advice.
2. It is a good idea to use a bland moisturiser whilst you are undergoing PUVA therapy.
3. Remember that the drug has been prescribed specifically for you and your diagnosed condition. Do not use the drug for any other condition or give the drug to others even if they have similar symptoms.
4. There are self-help groups for some of the conditions we treat – please ask nursing staff for details.
5. Always keep this drug and all other drugs out of the reach of children.

Whom do you need to contact?

If you experience any problems relating to your PUVA treatment or are unable to attend your appointment, please contact the nursing staff on: -

01384 244787 or
01384 244799 (out of hours answering machine)

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