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## **Narrow Band UVB Patient Guideline**

You have been referred to Marietta Dermatology and the Skin Cancer Center's light department for a course of narrow band ultraviolet treatments for your skin condition. This handout will explain this treatment in detail, including its risks, benefits and alternatives. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your dermatologist or the medical assistants in the Light Department.

### **What is ultraviolet B treatment (UVB)?**

Ultraviolet (UV) rays are made of electromagnetic waves produced by the sun which make up different wavelengths known as: UVA, UVB and UVC. Each wavelength affects the human body in different ways. UVA rays penetrate the skin and cause it to darken or tan, while UVB rays are mostly absorbed by the epidermis and cause the skin to burn. UVC rays are absorbed by the earth's ozone layer and rarely reach the earth's surface. UVB radiation is used to treat various skin conditions that are caused by an overactive immune cell within the skin and ultimately reduces their activity. Our office specifically uses narrow band UVB (wavelength measurement of UVB 311 to 312 nm), also known as phototherapy.

### **What skin conditions can narrow band UVB treat?**

Narrow band UVB is mainly used to treat psoriasis, but can also be used to treat other various skin conditions like: acne, eczema, atopic dermatitis, vitiligo, mycosis fungoides or CTCL.

### **Why should I have narrow band UVB treatment?**

This treatment should help to improve your skin condition. It is often recommended if you have tried ointments and creams without success. However, it is sometimes used in combination with other treatments. Most patients with psoriasis find their skin has improved after about 30 treatments and remains clear for 3-4 months or sometimes longer. Compared to other forms of phototherapy, narrow band UVB has the following benefits:

- For many conditions you are more likely to have longer periods of time where your skin condition disappears or improves with narrow band UVB than with broadband UVB.
- For many (though not all) conditions, narrowband UVB is as effective as PUVA but with fewer side effects.

### **Are there any other alternatives?**

Your dermatologist recommended this light treatment for you; however, there may be other treatments available, such as broad band UVB and PUVA. PUVA involves making your skin sensitive to light by taking tablets and then exposing it to UVA treatments. As well as these treatments, there is a wide variety of creams and ointments that can be used alone or compliment your UVB. Oral medications or injections may also be options to consider. Your doctor will explain all alternatives available to you in more detail. Please make sure you ask questions if you are uncertain.

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## **What does narrow band UVB treatments involve?**

- All narrow band UVB treatments are given at our Marietta location (see below for the address.)
- After signing-in for every treatment, our front desk staff will advise which sub-waiting room to proceed to where a trained medical assistant will call your name.
- Once in the exam room, you will be instructed to undress, exposing all affected areas and stand in a phototherapy unit along with sun protective eyewear which we will provide for you.
- You may also be required to wear particular undergarments to ensure all areas needing treatment are exposed while other areas are protected. Please keep in mind to cover the same areas each appointment to avoid burning. You will be advised in more detailed at your first appointment.
- A trained medical assistant will advise and administer your treatment plan. This treatment is to be repeated 2 to 3 times per week for about 20 weeks (some patients will need to be treated for a longer period of time.) Please consider the amount of commitment required before starting a course of treatment.
- You may experience a warm sensation during your treatments, but it will not hurt.
- Please always advise our medical assistants if you experience any skin sensitivity, pinkness or any sun burn sensations. This will aid our medical assistants with administering the correct dosage at every treatment.

## **On days of your appointment:**

- **Do not wear perfumes, deodorants, aftershave lotion or other cosmetic products before your treatments.** Some of these contain substances, which make your skin more sensitive to light.
- **Please also refrain from applying prescription topicals before appointments, as they can make your skin more sensitive to light.** This can also cause patchy discoloration of the skin and take some months to fade. You are more than welcome to bring your topicals and apply them after your treatments.
- For the same reason, please let us know if you have started any new oral medications or creams, as some can make your skin more sensitive to light.
- **Reduce your exposure to the sun's rays, to minimize the risk of sunburn.** Please be mindful of sunny days and use sun protective clothing (long sleeve shirts and hats) and apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or above (keep in mind to reapply every 2 hours). Please do not sunbathe or use a sun tanning bed during the whole course of your treatment.

\*\*Our medical assistants do their best to keep your appointment time, but if you find yourself waiting for more than 5-10 minutes, please stop by the check-out desk and inquire about your appointment time. Please keep in mind that we have a strict schedule and to try sign –in a few minutes before your appointment time. Also, if you need to reschedule or cancel your appointments, please call 24 hours in advance and ask to speak to the Light Department or leave us a detailed voicemail.\*\*

## **Checking your insurance coverage:**

If you are interested in narrow band UVB, please speak with your physician or a medical assistant in regards to checking your benefits for this treatment. Once we have initiated the request, our insurance department will call within 4-5 business days with your benefits before sending you to the light department to schedule appointments.

## **Having your consent and understanding our policy:**

If you feel this treatment is for you, we will require a signature on our attached consent form, which confirms that you agree to have treatment and understand what it involves. Our policy on scheduling appointments, cancellations and no shows will also be addressed in our consent form.