

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Dermatology Phototherapy– Waiting well

Introduction

What is phototherapy?

Natural sunlight has been known to be beneficial in certain skin disorders for many years. Phototherapy is a specialised treatment delivered by the phototherapy unit at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Narrowband UVB is a particular treatment where a small part of the UVB light spectrum is used to treat the skin condition.

Other types of phototherapy include PUVA and UVA1. The choice of phototherapy treatment depends upon your skin condition, and on discussions that you have had with your doctor about the treatment that would work best for you.

What skin conditions are treated with UVB and why am I having this treatment

By far the most common condition treated with Phototherapy is psoriasis. It is particularly useful in the treatment of guttate psoriasis, where topical treatment is difficult. Other conditions treated include eczema, nodular prurigo and pruritis associated with renal failure.

Treatment is given 3 times a week. A course of treatment normally lasts between 6 -8 weeks. Patients must be able to commit themselves to such a regime from the outset.

Patients must be able to stand unaided for several minutes, in a warm small space. Consideration must be given at patient selection to any possible barriers to this, such as: claustrophobia; uncontrolled diabetes; mobility difficulties; fainting; postural hypotension; alcohol/recreational drug intake. This list is not exhaustive. A safety assessment should be carried out at consent and nurse counselling session. Cardiac pacemakers are very unlikely to be affected.

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your appointment it is a good idea to keep track of your symptoms, when you experience them and what sorts of things seem to make them better or worse. You might like to keep a symptom journal so that you have a good record of this. Your doctor will also ask you about your medical history, family history of similar issues and any medication you are taking, so it is a good idea to think about this before your appointment.

The British Association Of Dermatologists (BAD) website has information booklets and videos available online via the following links. The information booklets will help you understand more about skin conditions and what can be done about them. Where possible they advise you on what you can do on a day to day basis to help with your skin condition:

www.bad.org.uk

Other good sources of information include

- www.psoriasis-association.org.uk
- www.eczema.org.uk

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We know that lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking and eating well can help. There is lots of information on eating well, exercise and lifestyle changes on the following link:

[Live Well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

GP surgeries are still open

Please contact your GP surgery for advice if you feel your condition is deteriorating.

GP surgeries are still open but may be working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices are utilising telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

GP surgeries can contact the Dermatology department for advice if needed.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.