

Endocrinology department

Daylight photodynamic therapy (DPDT) for actinic keratoses

Actinic keratoses is a condition which causes scaly patches of skin to appear, generally as a result of solar exposure over a number of years. It is often found on the head, face, ears, arms or legs – anywhere which has not generally been covered up from sun exposure. Actinic keratoses grow slowly however, there is a chance they can become cancerous if left untreated.

As the affected patches are not normally deep, we can treat this condition with daylight photodynamic therapy (DPDT). As with conventional photodynamic therapy (PDT) a photosensitising cream is applied to the lesion. The cream is left for 30 minutes so that the cells can absorb the photosensitiser. The area is then exposed to daylight which results in a chemical reaction to destroy the abnormal cells - while leaving the healthy skin unharmed.

Preparing for your treatment

- Apply a moisturiser (ideally urea based) to the area for **2 weeks prior to treatment**. This will help to soften the scaly patches of skin.
- If being treated on the scalp, ideally bring a hat.

What to expect during and after treatment

1. We will take a baseline photo to allow us to monitor how the treatment progresses.
2. The affected area of skin will be cleaned, and a chemical sunscreen applied which is then left for 15 minutes for the sunscreen to be absorbed.
3. The photosensitising cream is then applied and left for 30 minutes to be absorbed.
4. You will then be asked to sit outdoors for 2 hours with the affected area uncovered to expose it to daylight.
5. After 2 hours the cream is removed, and the affected area is cleaned. You can then leave the hospital. The treated area must be covered for the rest of the day after treatment has finished. Please bring a hat, scarf or long trousers depending on the area treated.

This treatment is only possible when there is enough daylight available, and conditions are comfortable enough to sit outside for 2 hours with the area treated uncovered. **As a result, we only offer this service from April to late September.** This treatment is not suitable during certain weather conditions such as rain or cold weather, or days where the cloud cover restricts the daylight levels. If such weather is predicted, we may need to cancel treatment.

During treatment there may be a mild tingling sensation however, as the dose rate from daylight is lower than that used in conventional PDT this will be relatively mild. Within the first few days the skin will become red and tight, blistering and some ulceration of the affected area may also occur. The skin may look red for up to 7 days.



Post treatment

After 8 weeks you will be offered an appointment during which we can assess the results of the treatment. If the sun damage was particularly severe, further treatments may be required. We will advise you at your appointment if this be the case.

Possible side effects

The skin may appear slightly darker or paler following treatment (hypopigmentation).

Contacts

For further information please contact the clinic:

Email: the-christie.pdt@nhs.net

Telephone: Clinical lead PDT on **0161 446 8561** or **07483 428204**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



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