

Patient Information

Minimal Erythema Dose (MED) Test and Narrowband UVB Therapy

Department of Dermatology – Hertford County Hospital

Introduction

This leaflet is intended to provide you with information regarding your minimal erythema dose (MED) test and narrowband UVB therapy. It is to help answer questions you or your family may have following your initial consultation and referral for treatment from a dermatology doctor or specialist nurse.

Narrowband UVB Therapy

You have been referred for UVB (ultraviolet-B radiation) therapy. UVB is the part of the natural sunlight that causes sunburn and tanning, however, it has been proven to be beneficial in the treatment of some skin disorders.

In the phototherapy unit we have a TLO1 machine containing fluorescent tubes which emit narrowband UVB. The tubes are part of a cabinet that you step into. Some patients find the cabinet claustrophobic but most get use to this in time.

Who will perform my treatment?

The treatment will be performed by registered nurses who work in the phototherapy unit.

Before your treatment

All patients are seen in the dermatology clinic prior to referral for phototherapy; at this point you will meet either a dermatology doctor or a specialist nurse. During this appointment we will ask you details about your medical history, carry out a clinical examination and arrange for any investigations. Please bring all your medications with you (including creams, patches and herbal remedies) as some medicines make you more sensitive to light.

This is a good opportunity for you to ask us any questions about the treatment, but please feel free to discuss any concerns you might have at any time.

Minimal Erythema Dose (MED) Test

An MED test will be carried out to determine the amount of light your skin can tolerate for the starting dose. The test consists of placing a handheld device on your skin with the smallest amount of light needed to produce some 'sunburn' on your skin. It gives out 10 measured doses of test light; your skin will then be checked 24 hours later for the starting dose to be identified.

Very occasionally, some of the tested skin may feel sunburnt and may develop brownish 'hyperpigmentation' (colour deposit in the skin that shows where the skin has inflamed), which will fade in a few months.

Precautions to take before treatment

- You should not sunbathe or use a sunbed whilst having UVB therapy.
- Before treatment your skin should be clean and dry.
- Do not wear deodorants, perfume or aftershave before treatment. Some of them contain oils, which sensitise the skin to light and may result in patchy discolouration of the skin that can take months to fade.
- Women do not need to wear underwear in the UVB cabinet. Men are advised to protect their genital area with a dark sock.
- During treatment you must wear goggles to protect your eyes; these will be provided by the department. You may also be advised to wear a transparent face mask if your face does not require treatment.

During treatment

Treatment is given two to three times a week depending upon diagnosis. If you start any new medication, please inform the phototherapy nurses as some medication can make you more sensitive to light.

The treatment sessions will gradually increase from a few seconds up to 10 minutes although the treatment times (and length of each treatment course) will differ from person to person depending on skin type.

Please be aware that patients under the age of 18 years will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult. If you are the patient and have children, please arrange for childcare at the time of your appointment as staff are unable to take care of children whilst you have treatment.

Are there risks from having this treatment?

There are side effects that may occur from UVB therapy which include:

- Skin may burn, blister or become very dry or itchy.
- Long term use of UVB may age your skin and slightly increase the risk of developing skin cancer.

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your treatment, please call the phototherapy unit at Hertford County Hospital, on the telephone number shown on the next page. The unit is open Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

If you experience a reaction to treatment outside of these hours, then please call **NHS 111** for advice.

Contact details

Dermatology Department
Hertford County Hospital
North Road
Hertford
Hertfordshire SG14 1LP

Telephone: Phototherapy unit	☎ 01992 823196
Dermatology secretary	☎ 01992 823012
Dermatology nurse helpline	☎ 01992 823020
Outpatient appointments	☎ 01438 284444

Further Information

Psoriasis Association - A national charity for people affected by psoriasis in the UK.

Tel: 01604 251620 (Monday to Thursday, 9am - 5pm and Friday 9am – 4.30pm)

Email: mail@psoriasis-association.org.uk

www.psoriasis.org.uk

National Eczema Society - A registered charity dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with eczema and their carers.

Helpline: 0800 089 1122 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm)

Email: helpline@eczema.org

www.eczema.org

The Vitiligo Society - A small, national charity who aim to support people with vitiligo.

Tel: 0800 018 2631 (Tuesday to Thursday, 10.30am – 2.30pm)

www.vitiligosociety.org.uk

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