

PDT (Photodynamic Therapy)

Your medical provider has determined that because of the many precancerous lesions (actinic keratosis) you have that she/he would like to have you undergo a series of treatments in our office called PDT.

I. What is PDT?

PDT or photodynamic therapy is a topical treatment (Levulan) for various skin conditions that has been in use for many years. It involves applying a clear liquid that combines with cells on the surface of the skin and converts to a chemical already present in small amounts in your blood stream called PHOTOPORPHYRIN IX. The higher concentrations now present on the skin make the area temporarily very sensitive to sunlight radiation and can create a sunburn type reaction. People who have an abnormal amount of this chemical in their bodies because of a genetic defect are unable to be in the sunlight for more than a few minutes without receiving severe sunburn reactions. In your case, however, this chemical wears off the skin in 48 hours. During this time you will be asked to remain out of the direct sunlight to try to prevent this localized sunburn reaction. On average a series of 3 to 4 treatments is needed. The treatments are performed monthly.

II. How is the treatment performed?

In our office, the skin is first cleansed and the clear liquid is rubbed into the area to be treated. It is then allowed to absorb into the skin around 1-3 hours while you wait in the office. A light source is then shined on your skin for 16 min 40 sec (1000 seconds) to activate the chemical. The chemical is then washed off the skin, a broad spectrum sunscreen is applied to the treated area, and you are allowed to return home. The entire procedure usually lasts less than two hours. Any vigorous precancers left after the treatment can be treated with liquid nitrogen.

III. Does the treatment hurt?

The chemical applied to the skin is painless. The actual treatment with the light sometimes stings or burns at certain areas but a fan can be used during the treatment that usually stops the discomfort. There is no pain afterwards unless you are exposed to the sun within the first 48 hours. You will probably get an uncomfortable sunburn. Sunlight through clouds can also activate this chemical until it wears off. You actually will get a better treatment result if this happens but the sunburn is uncomfortable.

IV. Will I have any reaction afterwards?

You may get redness, discomfort, burning, swelling, and/or peeling. This will be **MUCH** worse if you get additional sun exposure. We will apply a sunscreen before you leave but we recommend that you wear a broad brimmed hat, a scarf, or other shade producing device for your drive home and do not stop along the way to perform any errands. (AVOID SUNLIGHT) You can go out the first night once the sun goes down. **AVOID SUNLIGHT AFTER TREATMENT!** Sunscreen does not help much in this situation.

V. Will my insurance cover this?

Because this is for treatment of precancerous skin conditions and not for cosmetic reasons, insurance should cover this procedure. The medical provider will assess your condition and treatment on the third visit. You can ask him/her any questions at that time and he/she will determine if any additional treatments are necessary. You will be responsible for your copay as usual as well as any costs if you have not met your deductible.

VI. Why do I need this procedure?

There is strong evidence that the presence of precancerous lesions on the skin besides being painful and unsightly also increases your incidence of developing skin cancer. This is an effective, safe, and usually painless method of doing this. Other methods include freezing with liquid nitrogen or applying creams at home such as Efudex, Carac, or Aldara. These procedures are usually painful and can create weeks to months of blisters, rashes, and discomfort. PDT represents an alternative method to treat these areas. As always the need and method of your therapy is between you and your medical provider. Any concerns or questions should be thoroughly discussed to your satisfaction before a treatment plan is established.

If you have any further questions after you leave the office, please call our office at **(931) 484-6061** and we will be happy to answer your questions. We appreciate the confidence you have in our office to provide you with the most effective and current therapy to treat your skin condition.

Courtesy of **KENDALL ANNE MORRISON, M.D.**

**Cumberland
Dermatology**

Justin Bell, FNP-C / Brooke Huff, PA-C / Jessica Rotolo, PA-C

Cumberland Dermatology, P.C.,

29 Taylor Avenue, Suite 101, Crossville, TN 38555

303 N Oak Ave, Cookeville, TN 38501

P: (931) 484-6061 / F: (931) 484-6062 / www.cumberlanddermatology.com

cderm@cumberlandderm.com / cdermCKVL@cumberlandderm.com