Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)

Modern day photodynamic therapy, or PDT, as we call it, is a highly effective therapy that has been in use for the past forty years. PDT is a great way to treat an entire area of sun damage and target precancerous lesions that can lead to skin cancer. While we use this modality most often to treat pre-cancers, it is also an effective treatment for acne allowing a patient to avoid systemic medications.

Photodynamic Therapy is the application of a chemical compound to the skin, followed by exposure to specific wavelengths of visible light, which activates a chemical compound that releases energy in the form of activated oxygen that gets rid of abnormal cells. This treatment is used for removal of pre-cancers, known as Actinic keratosis.

Photodynamic Therapy

Photodynamic therapy was originally developed to treat different types of cancer and expanded to treat acne and sun-damaged skin safely and effectively.

Phototherapy works by using visible light in the blue or red spectrum and a topical product which produces oxygen “free radicals” which can rid the skin of unwanted damaged areas.

Photodynamic therapy is used for a wide range of skin conditions and diseases including:

• Actinic keratosis

• Superficial basal cell cancer

• Photodamage

• Acne

What to expect

Photodynamic therapy combines the use of a topical photosensitizer called aminolevulinic acid (ALA) and light therapy. The ALA is applied to the patient's skin, and the treated skin area is exposed to blue light, red light, or laser light, which activates the acid. The ALA concentrates in abnormal cells, oil glands, and hair follicles, and the light therapy destroys

the tissues that have absorbed the ALA. Photodynamic therapy allows specific areas of the skin to be treated while causing little or no damage to the surrounding skin. Minimal downtime is needed.

Photodynamic therapy for acne

An ideal acne treatment, photodynamic therapy targets the three main factors that cause acne: overproduction of oil, blockage of hair follicles and growth of bacteria. Together, the laser and ALA work to decrease oil gland production and to reduce the bacteria. This helps to diminish acne, and in some cases, completely remove the acne.

Photodynamic therapy for sun-damaged skin

Photodynamic therapy also works to decrease redness, sun spots and freckles, smooths fine lines and rough skin, and helps improve the skin's overall appearance.

Common questions about photodynamic therapy

Will I be sensitive to sunlight?

The treatment will make your skin VERY sensitive to light for 48 hours

Is there any down time with PDT treatment?

When booking your appointment, make sure that you do NOT have any commitments for 48 hours after treatment that requires you to be in sunlight (including sunlight through windows such as car rides).

What should I bring to the appointment?

If your face or scalp is being treated, please bring a hat (preferably a wide brim hat to cover your ears) and sunglasses to the treatment to wear home. If your arms are being treated, please bring a long sleeve shirt and gloves to wear home.

What do to after your treatment

Please purchase a sunscreen with SPF 30 and bring it to apply after your treatment and for 48 hours after treatment. The main active ingredient should be titanium dioxide or zinc oxide such as Elta MD Sunscreen.

Follow up in 1 week and 6 weeks or as instructed by your provider.

If you have any further questions, please call (941) 282-3376.