



Photodynamic Therapy is one of the newer techniques that uses a solution and light to treat sun damaged skin, skin cancers, aging, acne, and sun spots. It is non surgical, non invasive and produces improvement in skin tone and texture.

### **What is Photodynamic Therapy?**

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a treatment for a number of skin conditions such as sun spots, pre-cancers, acne and skin cancer. During the treatment a solution is applied to the skin for 1 – 4 hours and then the skin is exposed to either a Blue light or Pulsed light. The solution is selectively taken up by the abnormal skin compared to surrounding normal skin. The solution is then activated by the light (Blue or Pulsed light) which in turn removes the abnormal cells, and allows normal skin to replace them.

### **Does the solution have side effects?**

The solution is safe and does not lead to cancer. But it does make people sensitive to sunlight for 48 hours after treatment. This means that it is essential to wear sunscreen and avoid direct sun exposure strictly for 48 hours after treatment.

### **What sort of light is used?**

The Levulan solution can be activated by many different light and laser sources. We commonly use Pulsed light (IPL) and Blu-U. These are not ultraviolet lights, so they do not cause skin cancers. Light sources are not X rays. These light sources do not have harmful effects on the skin. In fact pulsed light (IPL) is used for skin rejuvenation, and for treating red veins and brown sun spots.

### **How Effective is Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)?**

Photodynamic therapy is highly effective in treating pre-cancerous spots, and some skin cancers. In the treatment of sun damage and aging, the cosmetic improvement may be significant. Skin texture, color and fine lines usually are improved. Acne can be successfully treated with monthly treatments of PDT. Even severe cases of acne can be successfully treated. In some patients the results are as good as accutane therapy.

### **Does PDT hurt?**

During PDT there is some burning discomfort. A cooling fan is used to minimize this discomfort. No topical anesthetic is needed.

### **What aftercare is needed after PDT?**

- Day of treatment: Remain indoors and avoid direct sunlight
- If you have burning and stinging, apply ice packs to the area
- Take ibuprofen as needed for pain or over the counter Zyrtec for itching.
- Keep skin moist with moisturizer, if crusting develops use 1% hydrocortisone ointment



- Regular makeup can be worn immediately after treatment.
- Redness may last up to 2 weeks and the skin will feel tight and dry, some peeling may occur
- Use a sunscreen with zinc or titanium oxide. We recommend Elta MD.

### **Do I need time off work?**

You may be red and swollen for a few days after treatment. There may also be some peeling of the skin. You may need to take some time off work but it is not necessary unless you work outdoors.

### **Is PDT suitable for all skin colors?**

PDT can be used in all skin types.

### **Does PDT cause scarring?**

Scarring is not usually associated with PDT.

### **Are there side effects with PDT?**

PDT has few side effects but these include:

- Sunburn with blisters. PDT makes the skin sensitive to sunlight for 48 hours after the treatment, so sunscreens are essential. If you have a history of cold sores/fever blisters, please let us know. We may want to pre-medicate for this.
- Pigment change- rare
- Infection- rare
- Scarring- rare

### **What parts of the body can PDT be used on?**

PDT can be used on all parts of the body, but the face is the most common site.

### **What age groups are suitable for PDT?**

PDT can be used in all age groups.

### **What if my sunspots do not go away with PDT?**

Not all sunspots are dangerous or atypical. We also offer cosmetic services like IPL that are designed to remove brown discoloration. These treatments are not covered by insurance. A consultation for our cosmetic services is offered for free.

For any questions please call us at **251-928-3844**