



## Wound Care Instructions Photodynamic Therapy

### What is photodynamic therapy?

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a unique treatment that uses a light activated compound (aminolevulinic acid HCL) to treat actinic keratoses. Actinic keratoses are areas of sun-damaged skin that if left untreated could possibly develop into skin cancer (basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma). Aminolevulinic acid is a substance that occurs naturally in the body that is converted to a photo sensitizer (protoporphyrin). The treatment may also be used for treatment of thin skin cancers such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma when other treatments are not suitable.

### How does it work?

The first step involves prepping the skin by scrubbing the skin with a gauze and acetone. This allows for degreasing of the skin so that the aminolevulinic acid penetrates more effectively. Next, is the application of the Kerastick solution (aminolevulinic acid) to the area to be treated. The solution is allowed to remain on your skin after application.

The second step consists of exposure to a special blue light for 30 minutes. The light activates the solution that was absorbed by the damaged cells, destroying the areas of sun-damaged skin.

### What side effects can I expect?

During the procedure, some patients may experience mild to moderate stinging and burning sensations. Usually this improves immediately after treatment and resolves completely in 24 hours. Less than 3% of patients need to stop treatment due to discomfort. A fan or ice pack can be used intermittently during the treatment. However, with this "painless PDT" protocol, most patients do not experience these symptoms.

### What do I do after the procedure?

After the treatment, sunscreen of spf at least 30 will also be applied. Patients need to stay out of direct sunlight for 48 hours, this includes sunlight coming in through windows. We recommend the use of a wide brimmed hat and protective clothing. You must apply sunscreen every 4 hours for the next 48 hours. Daily use of a mild cleanser followed by a facial moisturizer may be soothing. Discomfort can usually be managed with Tylenol (acetaminophen) every 4- 6 hours.

For the week following treatment, the area may become red and inflamed. You may also have some itching as well. The area will begin to peel after 2-3 days, and the reaction should be resolved after about a week. In rare cases the reaction lasts up to two weeks.

If it becomes severe or pain is not managed please call the number below.

### How effective is the procedure?

Most patients require 2 to 3 treatments spaced 4 to 6 weeks apart. Those with more extensive damage may require further treatments.

### PHONE NUMBERS TO CALL (Please call us with any questions or concerns)

- ☐ Weekdays 7AM – 4PM      Call the Clinic and ask for the nurse.