

# Information for patients having UVB treatment

Therapy department



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[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

## What is phototherapy?

Therapeutic Ultraviolet Light or UVB has been used in the treatment of skin conditions for many years.

Research has shown that skin conditions can improve when the skin is treated with radiation. This is because the sun bombards the earth with electromagnetic rays or radiation. Therapeutic UVB has been developed to deliver the maximum number of useful rays, whilst reducing the potentially harmful rays to a minimum. It is important that you understand that although the risks of being exposed to UVB have been minimised, it is still similar to sun exposure.

## What to expect during treatment

The UVB machine looks similar to a large telephone kiosk, but with tubes and reflectors instead of glass.

You will need to be able to stand upright in the machine for the duration of your treatment which may take up to anytime between 5-10 minutes. Your initial dose will be very low, this is increased every time you attend, depending on your skin's reaction to the previous dose. Sometimes this dose is increased, decreased or repeated.

You will have approximately 24-30 sessions. However if you find your skin has improved before the 24 sessions we may advise treatment is stopped. For the most effective treatment, it is important you attend consistently. Ideally this should be three times a week. Failure to attend for appointments will prevent progression of treatment and may lead to discharge.

## What will happen on the first appointment?

On the initial appointment the therapist will talk to you about your skin condition and ask you some basic background information about your medical history. It is important you bring with you a list of any medication, vitamins or herbal remedies you are taking as some drugs can sensitise your skin to UVB. You should not apply any creams, or sprays before attending as this can affect treatment.

## Clothing and eye protection

Patients are asked to remove all clothing as this allows the most

consistent treatment. However, if there are areas not affected by your skin condition you may be asked to cover these areas with appropriate clothing.

Male patients are advised to bring a black sock to cover their genitals, as treatment in this area is not considered advisable.

All patients must wear goggles and a visor in the machine, as UVB exposure can cause conjunctivitis and cataracts.

### Jewellery/hairstyles/facial hair

For consistency of exposure, we recommend that all jewellery is removed for treatment and that long hair is tied up off the neck. New hairstyles or changed facial hair should be avoided during treatment as previously unexposed areas may burn.

### Children

Children cannot be accompanied by an adult in the UVB machine, but should be accompanied by an adult who is prepared to stay within the room with them. Please note siblings or patients own children brought to appointments cannot be the responsibility of the therapist.

### Consent

You will be asked to sign a consent form before your treatment starts. This gives us your agreement for us to proceed with treatment. It is important that you understand how this treatment will benefit you and what the risks and side effects of having such treatment are before you sign the consent form. We have listed the possible risks and side effects on the next page. However if you are still uncertain about anything please ask a member of staff.

### Risks and side effects

The most common immediate side effect of UVB phototherapy is a mild sunburn reaction. This sunburn reaction is not normally serious and the therapist will adjust the dose of the next treatment or postpone treatment until it has settled down. Some people report itchiness in the initial stages but usually settles down quickly. It is important to inform the therapist if you have any of these reactions.

Long-term effects of UVB include increased risks of ageing to the skin and increased risk of skin cancers. This risk is very minimal but prolonged exposure is not advised.

UVB treatments aim to apply the maximum amount of UV the skin can tolerate. It is therefore extremely important that all other exposure to UV is avoided. This means avoiding sunbathing, sun exposure or sun beds whilst receiving treatment.

### **Over exposure**

If you do develop any severe sunburn type reactions please contact the department ASAP. If this is at a weekend please contact your local A&E department.

**The therapy department is open Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm**

**If you have any questions or require further information or advice, please contact the therapy department on 01935 384 358 or the dermatology secretary on 01935 384 871.**

**If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.**

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