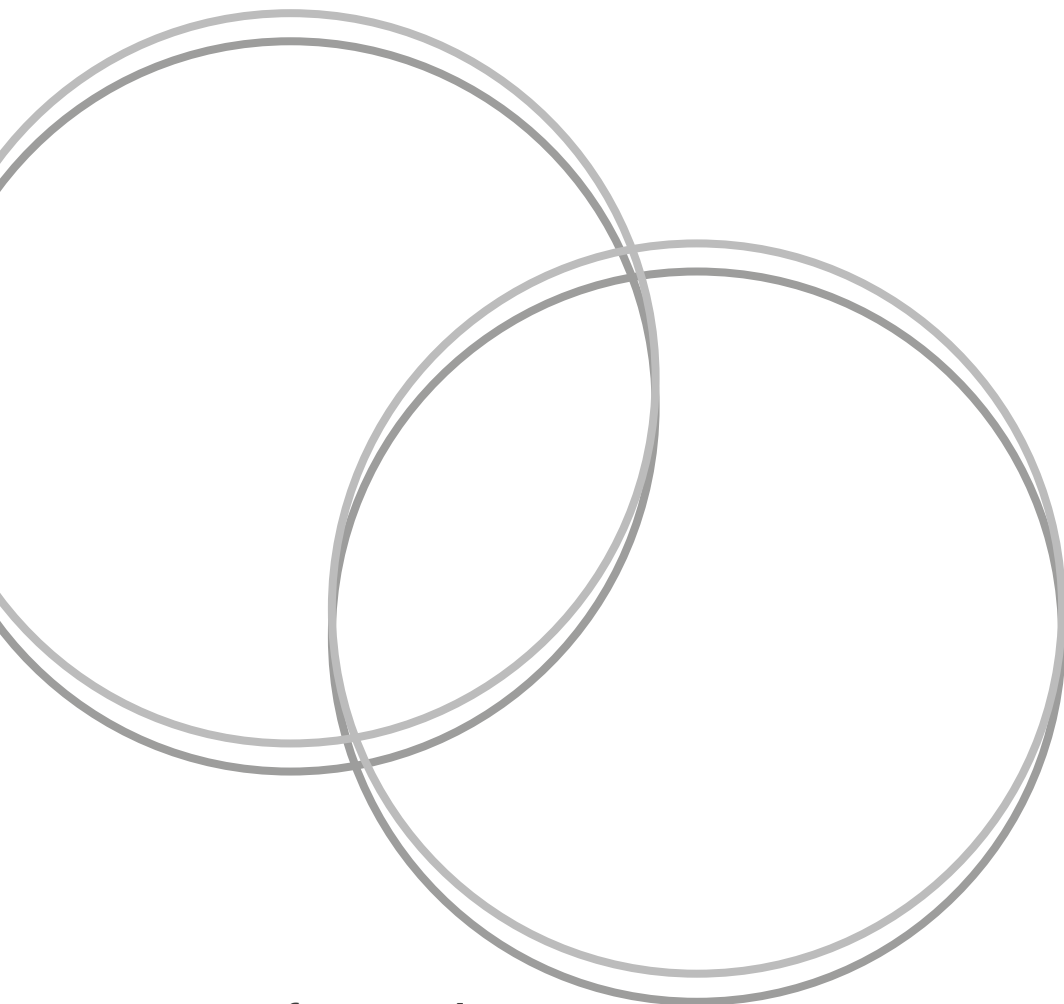




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Ultraviolet B (UVB) Light Treatment

Information for patients



Department of Dermatology,
Churchill Hospital

This leaflet provides written information about Ultraviolet B (UVB) treatment.

What is UVB light treatment?

UVB stands for 'ultraviolet B' and is a form of energy that comes from light. The most common source of UVB is from the sun – this radiation cannot be seen but it is responsible for causing sunburn and tanning. UVB can also help reduce inflammation in the skin.

UVB light treatment uses a particular subset of UVB and hence is also referred to as 'narrowband' or 'short wave' UVB light treatment. This is because research had demonstrated that a particular subset of UVB energy is especially useful for calming down skin inflammation.

UVB is used for many different skin conditions, particularly if other treatments (ointments and creams) have not worked. It is most commonly used for psoriasis, generalised eczema, and prevention of light allergy (polymorphic light eruptions). Ultraviolet light is not a long-term cure, but can improve your condition for a period of time.

What is involved?

UVB treatment is usually given three times weekly. The machine is a large cabinet with panels of fluorescent tubes. Initially treatment takes only a few seconds, but this will gradually increase to several minutes, depending on your response. Treatment is normally stopped as soon as the skin is clear and an "average" first course of UVB for psoriasis lasts roughly 2 to 3 months. The treatment does not work for everyone and in these cases treatment would be stopped if there is no improvement after around 5 weeks of regular treatment attendance.

During the actual treatment, protective eye goggles must be worn at all times in the cabinet.

It is important to attend all your appointments to achieve optimal treatment results. Please let the nurse know of any new medications you have started.

Patients will be asked to sign a consent form before treatment is started.

Side effects

The main side effects of UVB are sunburn and dryness of the skin. It also slightly increases the risk of developing skin cancer in the future, but the main cause of this is exposure to the natural sun over the years.

Burns

To minimise the risk of burning, the dose of light is started very low and is gradually built up as your skin becomes tolerant. You should always tell the nurse before your treatment if your skin was sore and red after the last treatment, as it may be necessary for the next dose to be adjusted or omitted altogether.

Itching and dryness

These are both common and can be helped by using a simple moisturiser regularly e.g. Cetraben cream, E45 cream, Emulsifying ointment. The moisturiser can also be applied at least 2 hours before your treatment to improve the effect of the light on your skin.

Cold sores

Those who have had cold sores (Herpes Simplex virus) in the past may get a repeat infection. Please inform the phototherapy nurse who would be able to give you advice.

Please ask staff at the time of the treatment if you have any further questions or contact:

Department of Dermatology

Churchill Hospital, Headington Oxford OX3 7LJ

Telephone (Phototherapy Suite): 01865 228 226

(out of hours emergencies – please call switchboard on

01865 741 841 and ask to speak to the on-call dermatology registrar).

Further information can also be obtained from the British Association of Dermatologists website:

Website: www.bad.org.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Oxford Department of Dermatology
August 2024
Review: August 2027
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

