

Home Hand-held NB-UVB Phototherapy

Dermatology

Introduction

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about home hand-held Narrowband UVB (NB-UVB) phototherapy for your skin condition. This leaflet explains this treatment in detail, including its risks and benefits. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is phototherapy?

The light from the sun is made up of lots of different forms of radiation and is known as the solar spectrum. Included in the solar spectrum is ultraviolet radiation. There are two basic types of ultraviolet rays that reach the earth's surface: UVB and UVA. Although both types are potentially harmful to the skin, they also have beneficial properties for the treatment of skin conditions. UVB rays are responsible for producing sunburn. UVB treatment is artificially produced ultraviolet B.

What is a hand-held phototherapy unit?

A hand-held device is fitted with a NB-UVB lamp and is used to deliver a small dose of UVB to selected patches of skin disease. It is used to treat skin conditions such as vitiligo. Initially the dose of UVB you receive will be very low but gradually the dose will increase. This means that to start with the treatment times are short but the time will increase gradually over the following weeks. NB-UVB treatment using the hand-held device is given on alternate days.

What are the possible side effects of NB-UVB?

Most people who treat themselves using the hand-held device experience no side effects. If side effects do occur, they are usually mild and virtually never permanent. Most side effects can be treated with cream (moisturiser or a steroid cream) or will disappear of their own accord within a few days.

- Some of the side effects that can occur include redness of the skin, similar to the redness caused by sunburn, especially in patches of vitiligo, as this skin is particularly prone to burning. Ideally there should be no redness of the skin after treatment and no discomfort. If at any time you feel that the dose of UVB has caused a discomfort or a marked persisting skin redness (like mild sunburn) you must let the phototherapy nurse know so that your treatment sheet can be adjusted

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

- You may get a spotty, itchy rash during your course (prickly heat): about one out of ten people do
- Depending on your natural skin colour, if your skin goes brown easily in sunlight, you may develop a dark tan around the vitiliginous patch, which you treated
- Cold sores can develop on the face if this area is being treated. People who tend to get cold sores in the summertime may wish to protect lips with a sunblock before treatment
- Occasionally NB-UVB can cause itching of the skin. This usually settles within a few days of starting treatment and regular use of moisturiser will help to minimise this

Long term use of NB-UVB may age the skin and cause an increased risk of skin cancer. However due to the potentially harmful effects, we like to limit treatment to under 500 in a lifetime.

- **Skin Cancer:** People who have a lot of sunlight exposure have an increased risk of cancer. In the UK approximately one out of ten of us will develop skin cancer. We do not know the full risk of this particular type of ultraviolet light (narrowband UVB) as many factors affect this. These risks are very low as only a small area of the body is being treated with the hand-held phototherapy device
- **Photoageing:** It is also possible if you need many treatments that you may develop sunlight induced skin changes with wrinkling and skin discolouration

What happens before I start my treatment?

A member of the Dermatology team (nurse or a doctor) will check the medicines that you are taking. This is because some tablets can affect the way treatment works.

If you or your child has been identified as a suitable candidate for home hand-held phototherapy, an individual, face to face training session will be arranged for you with a phototherapy nurse. The training session will take approximately 2 hours. During the training session you will be shown how to operate the hand-held phototherapy device, self-administer phototherapy to your vitiligo patches based on your individualised treatment protocol, and what to do in case you experience side effects.

How long will I have NB-UVB treatment?

Usually, this varies from person to person, but an average course lasts from 4 to 12 months.

It is important to appreciate that phototherapy is not curative and may need to be repeated in future if it proved helpful to the skin condition.

How often should I use my hand-held phototherapy lamp?

You should treat your vitiligo patches every other day, for example, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. This means you would do at least 3, and a maximum of 4 treatments per week. Please do not treat your vitiligo every day, as you must give your skin a break to recover from the light therapy. You can do your treatments at any time of the day suitable for you.

What are the safety precautions I have to take whilst having NB-UVB treatment?

- You must avoid sun beds and sun-bathing during your treatment
- Protective goggles must be worn whilst carrying out the treatment. If the eye area is being treated, you must keep your eyes shut
- A cotton glove should be worn on the hand, holding the UVB device
- Do not put any cream, ointment, sunblock, or perfumed products on the skin in the 2 hours prior to treatment as this can interact with the light and burn the skin
- Inform the phototherapy nurse if any of your medication should change during your treatment course. Certain medication can increase the sensitivity of your skin and can potentially burn you

- Apply sunscreen generously, at least twenty minutes before going outside. Choose a product with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 50 with a four or five-star UVA rating as well, as this makes sure you are protected against both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply sunscreen regularly, particularly after swimming or if sweating heavily. Be particularly careful with your sun protection between the hours of eleven and three o'clock

Contact details

Dermatology Outpatients NX

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English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。