

Phototherapy

Phototherapy (light therapy) is used in the treatment of skin conditions mainly psoriasis and eczema. Patients attending for phototherapy must be referred by their consultant dermatologist, who will prescribe their appropriate treatment.

There are two types of phototherapy available in the Bon Secours hospital - UVB and PUVA. UV stands for ultraviolet - UVB and PUVA are different parts of ultraviolet light which is in normal sunlight.

UVB/TL-O1 is a form of ultraviolet (UVB) light therapy with a narrow and precise band of wavelength. This has been demonstrated to be beneficial for the treatment of a variety of skin conditions. PUVA is also a form of ultraviolet light but is used in conjunction with a chemical substance called Psoralen. It is used in the treatment of hand and foot skin conditions in the Bon Secours Hospital

How is phototherapy given?

UVB can be given in a standup cabinet which has fluorescent tubes. Hand and foot PUVA is given by a smaller unit specifically designed for treatment of these areas.

What does it involve and how often do I attend?

Treatment involves the affected skin areas being exposed to UV. For UVB, treatment is 3 times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 6 – 8 weeks.

PUVA treatment is twice a week Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday for 9 – 12 weeks.

Each UVB treatment takes only a few minutes. Each PUVA treatment takes over one hour as hands & feet must be soaked in psoralens beforehand. Most dermatologists stop UV treatment when the psoriasis has cleared or improved significantly.

What will happen at my first appointment?

UVB

On your first appointment the UV treatment will be explained to you and any lifestyle risk factors discussed. You will be skin tested on your first day so that an accurate starting dose can be decided and treatment can commence the next day.

PUVA

On your first appointment the UV treatment will be explained to you and any lifestyle risk factors discussed. You will start your treatment immediately on your first day.

What will I achieve?

Following 18-24 sessions of the treatment it is hoped there will be a marked improvement in your skin condition.

What will happen when the programme finishes?

You will be reviewed by your consultant at approximately treatment 16. Once finished treatment a discharge summary will be sent to your consultant. This will document the total amount of treatment received and your treatment outcome.