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## **Treatment of Skin cancer using PDT.**

### **How PDT - ALA works:**

- PDT (Photo Dynamic Therapy) is a treatment that uses light to activate a photosensitizing agent ALA (20% 5 -aminolaevulinic acid). ALA is an antineoplastic (anticancer) agent that absorbs into the skin and concentrates in malignant cells and rapidly growing cells such as sun spots. Very little is absorbed into normal skin cells. Once activated the ALA causes destruction of these cells.
- It allows specific areas of the skin to be treated causing little or no damage to the normal skin and resulting in minimal down time for the patient.

### **Who should NOT have treatment with ALA:**

- Pregnant / Breast Feeding / You have a condition called – Porphyria

### **The Procedure**

- Prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> PDT-ALA treatment, the skin cancer requires thinning down. Local anaesthetic will be injected around the skin cancer. The tumour is then curetted to thin down the thickness. This enables the ALA solution to penetrate more effectively into the skin cancer. The 1<sup>st</sup> PDT-ALA Treatment can then usually proceed within 4-5 days.
- On the day of the 1<sup>st</sup> PDT-ALA Treatment (TREATMENT 1), the skin cancer is initially prepared by removing the surface scale.
- The ALA solution is then applied to the skin cancer and secured in position using dressings. A light-proof cover is also applied.
- Now we wait for the ALA to penetrate the cells. This “Occlusion Time” takes 3 hours, during which time you should go home.
- After the 3 hours, the dressings are removed and activation of the ALA is performed using the “Actilite”, a source of extreme red light illumination. During treatment you will be given light protective goggles because of the intense light. This takes approximately 10 minutes.
- There may be some pain or a prickling sensation felt during light exposure.
- Following illumination, the procedure is now finished and you can go home.
- This procedure is then repeated 7 days later. (TREATMENT 2)

### **Home instructions**

- Need to stay out of sun for 2 ½ days
- The area will look very sun burnt and will be peeling in appearance from day 3 through to day 7. The area will feel like you are sun burnt. It is very common to have a burning or stinging sensation, some crusting, swelling, and redness. You may well wish to take time off work, though this decision is yours.
- Application of moisturisers is encouraged after 48 hours.
- The treated areas should have settled completely by 1 week.