

Treatment of Sun Spots by 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

Preparation before the procedure:

- You will be prescribed a skin peeling cream to apply for 3 weeks to soften any scale. The peeling here is very gentle and mild with no or minimal inflammation.
- Just before your appointment, thoroughly wash your face with soap at home.

The Procedure.

- Any remaining skin scale will be lifted with a skin curette.
- ALA solution cream is applied to the treatment area. Takes approximately 15 minutes.
- Now we wait for the ALA to penetrate the cells. This “Occlusion Time” of one hour, is in a dark room so as to avoid light activation of ALA prior to it entering the skin cells.
- You may like to bring an iPod etc to listen to music.
- After one hour you go home.

Daylight Activation.

- Activation of the ALA is simply by natural light. You must sit on your verandah in a position that gets bright light but not direct sun.
- Apply a chemical sunscreen (without titanium or zinc) during the summer months.
- The activation will take 2 hours (3 hours if raining).
- Afterwards, shower and wash any residual ALA off your skin.
- Expect your face to become inflamed by 3-6 hours. It will be sore to touch for up to 3 days. The degree of reaction depends on the amount of sun damage present.

Home instructions

- A pain-killer and cortisone cream will be prescribed but are usually not required.
- Application of a moisturiser is encouraged from day 1.
- During the first 4 days your face will look very inflamed, swollen and can be painful to touch, as if you were very sun burnt. The skin will start peeling from about day 3-4 through until day 7. It is very common to have some burning or stinging sensation, some crusting, swelling, and redness. Sun exposure must be avoided for 7 days. After this, care should still be taken when going outdoors by wearing a wide brim hat and wearing sunscreen.
- The treated areas should have settled completely by 2 weeks.
- You should take some time off work. At least 4 days, but 7 days is recommended.