



## **Divine Dermatology**

### **Photodynamic Therapy with Ameluz/Levulan Pre and Post Care Instructions**

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) is a safe, non-invasive procedure to treat pre-cancerous lesions such as Actinic Keratosis. The treatment is performed with a topical photosensitizing solution called either Ameluz or Levulan, which is activated with a light source. Ameluz/Levulan is a naturally occurring substance found throughout the body. Once applied, Ameluz/Levulan is naturally attracted and absorbed by fast growing abnormal cells. After allowing the Ameluz/Levulan to incubate and fully absorb into the target cells, it is activated by a light source that emits red, visible light. This causes the skin to produce oxygen radicals that will destroy these target cells. This treatment will help remove pre-cancerous spots called Actinic Keratoses, sun damage and blotchy pigmentation.

Usually a series of 1-2 treatments is required to get adequate clearance of the Actinic Keratoses.

#### **Prior to Treatment**

- Please be prepared to spend approximately 2-3 hours with us for your visit, depending on the area being treated.
- You may need:
  - Benadryl oral tablets
  - Hydrocortisone 1% ointment
  - Wash cloths
  - Ice packs
  - Broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of 30 or higher
  - Gentle liquid cleanser & moisturizer (such as Cetaphil or Vanicream)
  - Sun protection hat (wide brim)
  - Umbrella
  - Tylenol or Ibuprofen
  - Prescription of Valtrex (if you have a history of fever blisters/cold sores)
  - White vinegar
  - Spray bottle
- Avoid tanning the skin by direct sunlight, tanning bed, or sunless tanner for at least 2 weeks prior to the procedure.
- You may want to arrange to bring something to read or a portable electronic device (ipad/iphone/ereader), to use during the Ameluz/Levulan incubation time which is typically one and a half hours.
- If you have your face treated be sure to bring a large hat to block the sun on your trip home from treatment. If your arms are being treated, bring a long-sleeve shirt or jacket to wear home. If your hands are being treated, bring gloves. It is also a good idea to bring an umbrella for sun protection when walking to your car. Ameluz/Levulan is absorbed into the skin and you will be sensitive to the sun for 48 hours AFTER the treatment.



- You may mix 1 teaspoon of white vinegar in a small spray bottle of water and store in the refrigerator to help reduce any stinging sensation (like a sunburn) you might have following treatment.
- Request a prescription for Valtrex from your physician if you have a history of cold sores, and if your face and/or scalp are being treated.

### **Day of Treatment**

Please arrive with treatment area clean and free of make-up, sunscreen, and lotions.

- First, the treatment area will be thoroughly cleansed.
- The Ameluz/Levulan will be applied and left on to “incubate” for the directed time period for the treatment. During this incubation period you may experience slight stinging and/or itching, and you must stay indoors away from light.
- After the incubation period, you will have Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) that will last about 20 minutes.
- The treatment itself may feel like you are getting a sunburn. Patients report feeling heat, burning, stinging, and seeing a flash of light. Most patients find using a fan helps the discomfort which is usually mild to moderate. However, some patients can have more intense discomfort and may require a pause in their treatment.
- Once the treatment is finished your skin may appear pink or red.
- Cover the area treated as much as possible. REMEMBER, you are sun sensitive for 48 hours after the treatment.
- Take analgesics (such as Ibuprofen or Tylenol) if necessary.
- Cool the treated area with your spray bottle of water/vinegar mixture which is stored in the refrigerator. If additional cooling is necessary, spray treated area and position yourself in front of a circulation fan. You may apply ice packs for additional comfort. Repeat if necessary, every 4 hours.
- Use a gentle cleanser and a gentle moisturizer such as Cetaphil, Vanicream, or Aquaphor.

### **Post Care Instructions**

You will need to stay out of the sun and avoid any intense, bright visible light, such as fluorescent or flood lights, for 48 hours following your treatment. That means no driving, walking, or being outside for even a few minutes at a time. Be sure to use a good sun block (SPF 30).

Keep the treated area clean so there is not a risk for infection. Apply moisturizer as often as needed. You may apply Aquaphor 2 times per day as needed. If the treated area should itch, apply a thin layer of Hydrocortisone 1% ointment or take oral Benadryl. Take pain medication as needed (Tylenol, Advil).

Use ice packs as necessary to keep down the swelling and to reduce pain. If treating the face, sleep with the head elevated to help reduce swelling. It may take several weeks for the redness to resolve completely.



### **What to Expect Post Treatment**

Depending on the length of Ameluz/Levulan incubation, you will have a sunburn-like effect that can last for up to 5-7 days. This can mean anything from being light pink to more swollen, red, and itchy appearance. Some patients may have a stronger response to PDT, and experience a more severe sunburn-like effect.

Peeling may begin on day 3 or 4. \*\*\*Make sure you do not pick at your skin!\*\*\*

Crusting, scabbing, and/or oozing may occur where there was more prominent sun damage and/or Actinic Keratoses. These symptoms are normal after PDT treatment, but we ask you to call if you have any concerns.

### **After Treatment Skin Care**

Avoid using any scrubs, toners, glycolic acid, retinoids (Retin-A), retinols, or bleaching creams (hydroquinone) for 2 weeks prior to the procedure and for 2 weeks following the procedure.

You may apply makeup as soon as you feel comfortable and once any crusting has peeled off. Again, do not pick or scrub the treated area. Proper and frequent application of sunscreen is very important. If direct sun exposure is necessary, wear a hat and clothing that covers the treated area in addition to your sunscreen.

To clean the treatment site, gently wash with your fingertips using a mild soap (CeraVe, Cetaphil, Neutrogena).