

## Hand-Foot PUVA Patient Information

### What is PUVA (Psoralen and Ultraviolet A)?

PUVA is a treatment that combines a prescription oral medication called psoralen (Oxsoalene Ultra®) and ultraviolet A (UVA) light. Psoralen makes the body more sensitive to UVA light and allows the UVA to penetrate deeper. Only your hands and/or feet will be placed in a light box that is lined with UVA light bulbs. Light treatment is given 2 times per week for 15-20 weeks. It is never given on two consecutive days. After clearing, some patients continue with maintenance treatments every 2-4 weeks.

### How is psoralen taken?

- The medicine is taken by mouth 1 ½-2 hours before the UVA light treatment. You will need to avoid sunlight on your skin for 24 hours after taking psoralen. You will need to wear special UVA sunglasses for 24 hours after taking psoralen.
- Take the medication with a low fat meal. Suggestions are milk, bagels, breads, and cereals.
- Nausea occurs in 6%. If you become nauseated, try ginger snap cookies or ginger capsules.

### Other Medications:

- Tell your doctor if you start or stop any medications, including over the counter medicine, vitamins, and herbal remedies. Many medications may cause your skin to react to sunlight and may cause you to burn. This is especially true for antibiotics.
- Do not use any topical medication before the time of your treatment. You should continue to use topical medicines as directed by your doctor, but apply after your treatment.
- Please inform your provider if you have liver disease.

### What are possible side effects of PUVA therapy?

- Redness, peeling (sunburn), and stinging is possible, even with careful dosing of medication and light exposure. Painful blistering, although unusual, may occur even with careful dosing.
- Increased risk of skin cancers and premature aging of the skin. Have your skin checked by your doctor every year.
- Report any change in existing moles such as itching, growing, or color change, and any new moles.
- **Possible increased risk of cataracts. Wearing proper eye protection will reduce your risk. You must wear the protective goggles during your time during the light treatment. Special UVA-blocking wraparound sunglasses (purchased in our clinic) must be worn for 24 hours after taking psoralen, except at night. You do not need to wear sunglasses indoors, unless you are facing a window during daylight hours. In that case, you may want to turn your back to the windows.**
- Have a yearly examination by an ophthalmologist to check for early stages of cataracts.
- Tan or darkening of the skin.
- Dry itchy skin, which can be treated with moisturizers like Aquaphor or plain Vaseline.

### What other instructions should I follow?

- A PUVA treatment is like a day in the sun. If you are planning on being outside, wear protective clothing and sunscreen. NEVER take your medication and sunbathe or go to a tanning salon. Severe sunburn may result from exposure to sunlight or tanning lights.
- If you become pregnant, or think you are pregnant, do not take the psoralen (Oxsoalene®), and tell your technician immediately.