

Treatment Modality

When only the red/blue light is used, the treatment is safe and effective, with no down time. It is also cheap, and large areas of skin can be treated. This is usually used in the cosmetic setting for moderate rejuvenation of the skin.

However, when the ALA cream is used together with the light, it's a different matter altogether. Here, the expertise of the doctor and her/his team is invaluable. Even experienced doctors are still learning the procedure, as PDT is not an exact science. Sometimes repeat treatments may be necessary to achieve the best results.

Excellent rejuvenation of the old, tired, exhausted skin is achieved, leaving the patient with a smooth, soft skin - devoid of those horrible itchy and sometimes painful SKs



To achieve optimum results, choose a practice where the doctors have a lot of experience in the use of ALA and light treatments, as this treatment with cream and light is not for the faint hearted. Preferably a dermatology practice should be selected for this procedure. Pain management is crucial, and is usually done with an injection of local anaesthetic or painkiller tablets. The blowing of cold air onto the skin also helps in relieving the pain.

The Candidate

It is an excellent choice for the use in patients with "wall-to-wall" solar keratoses, ie: numerous SK's covering the face, arms, hands and legs. But the patient needs to be fully informed about the treatment and aftercare. It is mandatory that the person who has received this treatment remains indoors for at least two days, even avoiding fluorescent lights, TV and laptop lights.

Large superficial tumours of the skin can also be treated with excellent long term results. Many patients can avoid the high cost of radiotherapy or extensive surgery – and still get a stunning result.

The classic patient is the ex-sun worshipper lady, retired teacher, the farmer, builders, sports people and ruddy men who let their skin go to pieces in the false belief that it was not necessary to protect their skin from the sun.

Sometimes patients who have had only the one side of the face treated due to a tumour on the one side, will request that the other side be treated as well - since there is such a difference between the treated and untreated skin!

However, not all patients or skin tumours are suitable for this treatment.

Patients with auto immune diseases,

eg lupus erythematosus, light sensitive eczema, porphyria and some metabolic disorders are not suitable.

Some medicines that cause temporary light sensitivity need to be stopped for a few days before the treatment.

The Result?

Excellent rejuvenation of the old, tired, exhausted skin is achieved, leaving the patient with a smooth, soft skin - devoid of those horrible itchy and sometimes painful SKs. ALA-PDT also improves the whole area that is treated, and creates one colour, texture and tone. In contrast, treating with liquid nitrogen (freezing), cautery (heat) or surgery often leaves white spots and other marks and scars.

ALA PDT is an excellent treatment for the right patient who has been fully informed about what the treatment entails, the post treatment care necessary, and the results that can be expected. It is very rewarding for both the doctor and the patient. The latter of whom exclaim that their skin has not felt this smooth for years!

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4

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