

## **Phototherapy**

Phototherapy (called light therapy) involves exposing the skin to wavelengths of ultraviolet (UV) light. During phototherapy treatment, UV light penetrates the top layers of skin to decrease inflammation. Both UVA and UVB are found in natural sunlight however the in-office machines deliver very accurate and measured doses of light energy. Several skin conditions can be treated with light therapy including: psoriasis, eczema, vitiligo, itching, and many others. Phototherapy can be safely used in children as well as adults, including pregnant women. Potential side effects might include burns, blisters, itching, changes in skin coloring, redness, and premature aging of the skin. Phototherapy may not be appropriate for patients with skin cancer.

Your doctor will decide on the correct form and dose of phototherapy based on your skin type and your condition. Most treatments should be performed 2 to 3 times weekly on non-consecutive days.

At your first light visit, a medical assistant will carefully review the steps for treatment with you. After the first treatment, you will be responsible for getting yourself ready for each treatment and ringing the doorbell for the medical assistant and provider to enter the room and start your treatment.

### **Directions for treatment:**

- The patient or parental guardian will sign a consent form before the first treatment.
- Be sure to schedule a follow up visit with the doctor every 3 to 4 months to monitor progress.
- Your phototherapy session may be administered by a doctor, nurse, or physician assistant.
- You may see different providers each visit but they will not be able to perform a medical visit the same day as a light treatment. *Insurance will not pay for a medical visit and phototherapy visit on the same day.* If you have a problem unrelated to your phototherapy session, please schedule a separate appointment.
- Eye protection **MUST** be worn for all treatments. Any family members in the treatment room must also wear eye protection during the treatment or else they must step outside the room.
- Males must wear genital protection every treatment (underwear, shorts, or jock strap).
- Any areas not needing treatment should be protected with sunscreen and/or clothing.
- Applying Vaseline prior to your light treatment can make the treatment more effective. We encourage all patients to apply Vaseline.
- The amount of energy and length of treatment will be increased each time as long as you did not have any problems.
- If you miss too many days between treatments or get a burn, the dose will be lowered.
- It is very important to be consistent with the area of skin exposed/not exposed. For example, if you previously wore pants, and then switched to wearing shorts, *your legs could get a sunburn.*
- Please let the medical assistant and/or doctor know if you missed any treatments, started any new medications including over-the-counter medications (e.g. ibuprofen, Motrin, Naprosyn, etc.), or had problems (e.g. sunburn, blistering) with the last treatment.