**PUVA Therapy Instructions**

**What is PUVA?**
PUVA is a treatment that combines oral medication called psoralen (Oxsoralen®) and ultraviolet A (UVA) light. Psoralen makes the body more sensitive to UVA light.

The UVA light treatment takes place in a light box unit. A light box looks like a closet and is lined with ultraviolet light bulbs. The treatment unit is not locked, and if needed, you may stop a treatment at any time by pushing on the doors. The technician is always present while the unit is running.

**How is psoralen taken?**
- The medicine is taken by mouth 1 ½ hours before the UVA light treatment.
- Take the medication with a low fat meal. Suggestions are milk, grains, bagels, breads, and cereals.
- If you become nauseated, try ginger snap cookies.
- The medication dose is based on your weight. Do not take more or less psoralen without your doctor’s advice.
- The medication works only with UVA light. Never take psoralen at any time other than the time of treatment.

**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.
- Store the medication away from heat and light.

**What are possible side effects of PUVA therapy?**
The following conditions are possible side effects:
- 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.
  - Report any new moles or pearly looking nodules (lumps, bumps).
- Possible increased risk of cataracts. Following eye protection guidelines will help reduce your risk.
  - Have a yearly examination by an ophthalmologist to check for early stages of cataracts.
  - You must wear the protective goggles during your time in the phototherapy booth.
  - Special UVA opaque glasses must be worn for 12 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.
• Redness or peeling (sunburn) is possible, even with careful dosing of medication and light exposure.
  • Report any itching, tenderness, or painful blistering to your technician or doctor.
  • Painful blistering, although unusual, may occur even with careful dosing.

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.
• Cover your face with a disposable cloth during treatment unless told otherwise by your doctor.
• Women need to cover their nipples and areola (colored area around the nipples) with zinc oxide cream which is provided.
• Men need to protect genitals with underwear, jockstrap, or mask.
• Never change your treatment on your own without discussing with your technician. This includes making changes such as switching from boxer shorts to jockey shorts, or changes in position, such as raising your arms. Skin burns can result from these changes.
• If you become pregnant, or think you are pregnant, do not take the psoralen (Oxsoralen®), and tell your technician immediately.

About your appointment
• PUVA appointments need to be scheduled. Please be on time to prevent scheduling problems and as a courtesy to other patients.
• If you can’t keep your appointment for any reason, please call to inform us as early as possible.
• Please arrange for adequate childcare during your appointment. Regretfully, our staff is unable to help provide childcare either in the reception or treatment areas.

Talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your PUVA therapy.