

What is the Process of UVB Therapy?

- Appointments are usually 2–3 times/week.
- Initial assessment by a physiotherapist to determine whether UVB therapy is appropriate for you, and to develop a treatment plan.
- Initial exposure of less than 1 minute.
 - Determined by your skin type.
- The goal of UVB treatment is to achieve a pink sunburn reaction that appears in 6–8 hours and disappears in 24 hours.
 - Please monitor your reaction and how long it lasts. Your therapist will ask you about this at your next visit.
- Exposure progressed to a maximum of 15 minutes per session.
- As skin clears, a maintenance program is started or treatment may be stopped.

Process for Treating Overexposure

- We carefully monitor the dose of your UVL treatment to minimize the risk of burns, but overexposure (sunburn) is still a risk of UV therapy.
- If you have severe redness and discomfort following UVB treatment, symptoms can be reduced by:
 1. Take a combination of an antihistamine, (e.g. Benadryl) and ibuprofen (e.g. Advil), unless you have been advised not to take these medications. Follow the instructions on the bottle and talk to your family doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure whether it is safe for you to take these medications.
 2. Cool bath with baking soda.
 3. Apply a non-oil based moisturizing cream.
- If discomfort and redness persists, please phone and let your therapist know. We will cancel your next appointment and resume when the sunburn has faded. You may also need to see your doctor.
- If you have swelling, blisters, or severe pain, please immediately go to your physician or the emergency department.

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Ultraviolet Light Therapy for Treatment of Psoriasis

What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a non-contagious genetic disease of the immune system. It is commonly characterized by thickened patches of skin with silvery-white coloured scales. These patches are most often seen on the elbows, knees, and scalp but can involve any area of the body.

What is the Treatment?

There is no known cure for psoriasis but there are several effective treatments including the use of topical creams and ointments, exposure to sunlight, and exposure to certain types of artificial light (i.e. UV light therapy).

What is Ultraviolet (UV) Therapy?

Ultraviolet (UV) light therapy is the treatment by ultraviolet radiation from special light bulbs. Wavelengths of ultraviolet light are classified as UVA (long rays) or UVB (short rays).

At St. Mary's Hospital, only UVB rays are used for treatment.

The effects of UVB therapy are:

- Erythema (reddening of the skin) that usually occurs 6–8 hours after treatment.
- Desquamation – a casting off of cells that have been destroyed by UV light.
- Slowing of the rapid growth of skin cells associated with psoriasis.

What are the Risks of UVB Therapy?

- UVB rays increase your risk of skin cancer.
- UVB rays can cause premature aging of the skin.
- UVB therapy can cause sunburn.

Who cannot have UVB Therapy?

If you have any of the following conditions, please inform your therapist:

- Skin cancer
- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Photoallergy
- Radiation therapy within the last 6 months
- Recent skin grafts

What Precautions are taken with UVB Therapy?

- Basal cell carcinoma (benign skin tumors) and unusual moles should be watched.
- Patients who have undergone radiation therapy in the past should be watched for signs of carcinoma.
- Cardiac patients may not tolerate prolonged standing or exposure to heat stress.
- Drug interactions can cause a sunburn reaction – please tell your therapist what medications you are currently taking and when these change.
- Please inform your therapist if you have a light sensitivity, eczema, dermatitis, herpes simplex, or if you are pregnant.
- You must temporarily stop UVB therapy if you have a sunburn or fever.