

# *Laser Skin Solutions*

*Hair & Vein Removal ♦ Sun Spot Removal ♦ Restylane ♦ Botox ♦ Skin Care ♦ Tattoo Removal*

## **WHAT IS PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY?**

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is a special treatment performed with a topical photosensitizing agent called Levulan (5-aminolevulinic acid or ALA) activated with the correct wavelength of light. This is also known as “ALA/PDT treatment.” These treatments remove sun damaged pre-cancerous zones and spots called actinic keratoses. Sun damage, fine lines, and blotchy pigmentation are also improved because of the positive effect of Levulan and the light treatment. ALA/PDT treatment also has the unique ability to minimize pores and reduce oil glands, effectively treating stubborn acne vulgaris, acne rosacea, and improve the appearance of some acne scars.

## **HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN I EXPECT?**

Patients with severe sun damaged skin manifested by actinic keratosis, texture, and tone changes including mottled pigmentation and skin laxity may see excellent results. You may also see improvement of large pores and pitted acne scars. Active acne can improve dramatically.

## **HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL IT TAKE TO SEE THE “BEST RESULTS?”**

To achieve maximum improvement of pre-cancerous (actinic keratoses) sun damage, skin tone and texture, a series of three treatments 2-4 weeks apart is the most effective. Some patients with only actinic keratoses are happy with just one treatment. More treatments can be done at periodic intervals in the future to maintain the rejuvenated appearance of the skin.

## **WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?**

Following PDT, the treated areas can appear red with some peeling for 2-7 days. Some patients have an exuberant response to PDT, and experience marked redness of their skin. Temporary swelling of the lips and around your eyes can occur for a few days. Darker pigmented patches called liver spots can become temporarily darker and then peel off leaving normal skin. (This usually occurs over seven to ten days.) Repeat treatments may be necessary as PDT medicine is not an exact science.

## **WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?**

1. **Easier** for the patients than repeated topical liquid nitrogen, Efudex (5FU), or Aldara because the side effects are minimal, rapid healing, and only 1-3 treatments required.

2. The ALA/PDT treatment at our clinic is **painless** versus liquid nitrogen, 5-FU, and Aldara.
3. **Reduced scarring** and improved cosmetic outcome compared with cautery, surgery and Efudex. Liquid nitrogen can leave white spots on your skin.
4. Levulan **improves the whole facial area treated** creating all one color, texture, and tone rather than just spot treating with liquid nitrogen, cautery and surgery.

In summary, PDT matches the “ideal treatment” for photodamaged skin:

- well tolerated (essentially painless)
- easily performed by a specialty clinic environment
- non-invasive (no needles or surgery required)
- excellent cosmetic outcome (particularly in cosmetic sensitive areas of the face)

### **TREATMENT STEPS**

1. Patients who have a history of recurring cold sores (Herpes simplex type I) should start oral Valtrex 1 gram, one tablet daily for three days – starting this prescription the morning before your PDT treatment. The prescription for this product will be ordered for you.
2. Make sure your skin is clean and free of all makeup, moisturizers, and sunscreens. Bring a hat, sunglasses, and scarf when appropriate to the clinic.
3. Photography will be done by the staff before the Levulan is applied.
4. You must sign a consent form.
5. An acetone scrub is performed. This will enhance the absorption of the Levulan and to give much more even uptake.
6. Levulan is applied topically to the whole area – whole zone to be treated (such as the whole face, back of the hands, extensor part of the forearms).
7. The Levulan is left on for 30-90 minutes before any light treatment.
8. The Levulan is activated with a unique spectrum of light beginning with low energy levels. This is painless but requires about 8 minutes to complete.
9. Post-treatment instructions will be given to you to care for your improved skin.