

Laser Skin Solutions

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

PHOTODYNAMIC ACNE TREATMENT

A new procedure is now available that treats active acne as well as older acne scars leaving your skin smoother. The procedure is called **Photodynamic Acne Treatment** using Levulan.

Photodynamic Acne Treatment is a process by which a photosensitizing agent (Levulan) is applied to your skin. The Levulan is then activated with a specific wavelength of light, which “turns it on.” Levulan has been used extensively for the treatment of a variety of different skin conditions, and it is approved by the FDA and Health and Welfare Canada for the treatment of sun damaged skin.

Levulan is a 20% solution of Aminolevulinic Acid (ALA). ALA is a natural substance found throughout your body, as it is a precursor for hemoglobin synthesis. You would be unable to make a red blood cell carry oxygen without ALA in your body. Consequently, it is a “natural” product found in all humans.

Acne results from the obstruction and inflammation of the sebaceous glands, and it affects 80% of the human population. Acne typically begins in adolescence with hormonal changes. However, there are many older individuals who suffer from “adult acne.”

There are several different presentations of acne ranging from comedonal (blackheads and whiteheads), popular, pustular, and cystic acne. In many cases, many of these presentations of acne can be present on an individual simultaneously.

Prior to Photodynamic Acne Treatment, the best available treatment option for cystic acne was Accutane. However, with Accutane there are many systemic side effects including birth defects, liver abnormalities, mood depression, and virtually all patients get dryness and night vision changes. PDT Acne treatment provides a viable alternative for all types of acne treatment.

Photodynamic Acne Treatment is done as follows: The Levulan is applied to your skin and left on for 30-60 minutes. Levulan is a clear solution and painless. Levulan is then activated with a specific wavelength of light called a BLU-U. This takes about 8 minutes. The Levulan targets active cells. Acne sebaceous glands are active cells. These cells preferentially absorb Levulan, and these cells are targeted by the Levulan once it is activated; hence the term, photodynamic therapy. The Levulan will also target sebaceous hyperplasia (which are those small (1-3 mm), benign, bumps on your skin) and the papules of acne rosacea. Skin oiliness is decreased, and the appearance of pores is minimized. The entire skin texture improves following a Photodynamic Acne Treatment.

The “downside” of Photodynamic treatment (PDT) is that you will be red and have some skin peeling (and crusting if you have skin cancers) for several days after the treatment. Usually, the first 1-2 days are the worst. Liquid mineral base called Lycogel (available in our office) will hide most of the redness. We advise remaining indoors the day following your treatment to avoid sun exposure, as you are photosensitive for about 24 hours after PDT.

The advantages of PDT are rapid treatment of acne lesions all over the face without scarring or surgical excision. The skin appears refreshed and younger following these treatments. We advise 2-3 treatments at 2-3 week intervals to obtain optimal results. There are no systemic side effects.

These ALA treatments can be combined with our regular Photorejuvenation treatments using IPL, which targets redness and brown spots, as well as stimulates formation of more collagen in the skin. There is normally no downtime for IPL treatments without Levulan. However, one can enhance and “boost” IPL photorejuvenation results by adding Levulan to the treatment process. This is termed an activated Fotofacial, or photodynamic skin rejuvenation when PDT is added to regular IPL photorejuvenation.

Naturally, you can use your topical acne lotions in between your Levulan treatments once the redness has settled down after a few days.