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## PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY (PDT)

### What does it do?

PDT is used to treat pre-cancerous lesions, wrinkles, sun damaged skin, pustular and cystic acne.

### How does it work?

5-Aminolevulinic Acid (ALA) is a substance that is naturally produced by several tissues in the body such as the skin. When it is applied topically, it is selectively absorbed into the fast-growing cells in sun damaged skin, oil glands, hair follicles, and pre-cancers. The ALA is then activated by an appropriate light source to destroy the target cell without harming adjacent normal tissue. There are several light sources that can safely activate ALA. These include Intense Pulsed Light (IPL), Pulsed Dye Laser (PDL), blue light, red light, or a combination of any of them.

### How many treatments are needed for maximal results?

ALA with the IPL: 2 to 3 treatments are usually necessary.

ALA with the blue light: 4 to 6 treatments

Acne: 2 weeks between each treatment

Actinic Keratoses (AK's) and sun damaged skin: 1 month between each treatment.

### How long does it take to see results?

Some patients may see results immediately. Most patients notice a gradual improvement over the course of 4 to 6 treatments.

### How long do results last?

The effects of this procedure last for various amounts of time depending on the condition being treated and the patient's compliance with their skin care regimen and sun protection.

### Is it painful?

The ALA may sting a bit when first applied. The blue or red light feels like a bright warm light shining on the skin. The IPL penetrates a bit deeper and may cause slight discomfort similar to that of the snapping of a rubber band along with a heat sensation.

### Is there any downtime afterwards?

Redness and swelling is seen in some patients after the treatment. There may be a peeling process, which usually takes two to three days but can take up to 7 to 10 days to subside. Sun should be strictly avoided for 24 to 48 hours after treatment.

### Who cannot have this procedure?

Pregnant patients or patients who have taken accutane in the past year should not be treated.