

# Home Instructions: Care after Photodynamic Therapy

## Common Problems in Areas Treated with PDT

- **High sensitivity to the sun** (photosensitivity) for 48-72 hours after treatment. Keep treated areas covered with appropriate clothing.
- **Swelling:** Use ice packs on the treated area(s) as soon as possible after your treatment. Keep the pack(s) on for 10 minutes of every hour. If you have moderate to severe swelling about 6-8 hours after your treatment, take diphenhydramine (Common brand name, Benadryl®). You do not need a prescription. Take 25 – 50 milligrams (mg) every 6 hours, as needed.
- **Redness, soreness, fluid drainage, swelling.**
- **Scabs:** Eventually a scab may form, though it can take 2-6 weeks or more to form. A thin scab is normal. Gently clean the scab 2 times a day with a mixture made of equal amounts of water and hydrogen peroxide. Dry by patting the area gently. Do not rub it vigorously or make bleed.
  - If you develop a thick scab (eschar): Soak gauze in water and place it on the eschar for about 15 minutes. After soaking, gently clean the wound with a Q-tip or gauze. Gently pat dry the area. Do this 2-3 times a day. Scabs may just fall off on their own or your doctor may remove them.
- **Facial swelling:** May occur if treated areas are on the scalp, face, or head. To help reduce/prevent this swelling, sleep on several pillows and use ice packs as directed above.

## For The First 3 to 7 Days

- ✓ Wash your hands and apply a dressing as needed. After 2-3 days, a dressing is optional.
- ✓ Every day, wash with an antibiotic soap such as Cetaphil® antibacterial bar. Apply a thin layer of Aquaphor® or Vaseline® to the wound. **Do not use Neosporin (antibiotic ointment).** After 7 days, apply a small amount of Aquaphor® or Vaseline® 3-5 times a day to keep treated areas from drying out.
- ✓ If you had facial lesions treated: Wash your face very gently. Do not use facial makeup for at least 1 week.
- ✓ You can shower immediately after your treatment. Use lukewarm water. **Do not take a tub bath for 7 days after treatment.**
- ✓ For pain during the first few days, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Take 1-2 500 mg tablets every 4-6 hours as needed. **Do not exceed 4,000 mg a day.** That is 8 tablets in 24 hours if that is your only source of acetaminophen. Many products contain acetaminophen including Alka-Seltzer® Plus, Contac®, DayQuil®/Nyquil®, Robitussin®, and Excedrin®. Be sure to check the ingredients label for acetaminophen or APA on any medication you take.
- ✓ It is normal to develop small, clear blisters in treated areas.

## When to Call the Doctor

If you have any of the following, call us.

- Profuse bleeding
- Large amount of drainage
- Any odor or change in color of clear drainage
- Fever above 100.4°F (37.8°C) for more than 24 hours

## Dermatology Center

Open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Please call **716-845-2205** during business hours.

After hours, 24/7, please call **716-845-2300** or toll-free **1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355)** and our Call Center staff will assist you. If it determined you need to be seen, you may be referred to our Assessment & Treatment Center (ATC). The ATC is open 24/7 but you must be referred by your provider, or the provider on call. The ATC is not a walk-in center.

If you are having life-threatening symptoms, please call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Please contact Roswell Park at the numbers above, and let us know you are in ER or have been admitted to the hospital.