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Levulan Photodynamic Therapy Information

Your doctor has recommended Levulan PDT treatment. It is usually recommended that you have this treatment once to twice a year if you have pre-cancerous growths. Levulan (Aminolevulinic acid 20%) is a naturally occurring, photosensitizing compound which has been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to treat pre-cancerous skin lesions called actinic keratosis. Levulan is applied to the skin and subsequently "activated" by specific wavelengths of light. This process of activating Levulan with light is called Photodynamic Therapy. The purpose of activating the Levulan is to improve the appearance of the skin by reducing acne rosacea, acne vulgaris, sebaceous hyperplasia, decrease oiliness of the skin, and improve texture and smoothness by minimizing pore size. Any pre-cancerous lesions are also simultaneously treated. The improvement of these skin conditions (other than actinic keratosis) is considered an "off label" use of Levulan.

Levulan will be applied to the skin for roughly 60-90 minutes prior to treatment. Subsequently, the area will be treated with a specific wavelength of light (blue light therapy) to activate the Levulan. The patient should avoid direct sunlight for 48 hours following the treatment, this entails wearing SPF at home and not going outside for any reason during daylight, due to photosensitivity. This treatment is not recommended if you are pregnant.

Anticipated side effects of Levulan PDT treatment include discomfort, burning, swelling, redness and possible skin peeling, especially in any areas of sun damaged skin and pre-cancers of the skin, as well as lightening and darkening of skin tone and spots, and possible hair removal. The peeling may last many days, and the redness for several weeks depending on the individual response to treatment.