

Narrowband UVB Phototherapy

What to expect and possible risks

This handout explains what to expect and the possible risks when having phototherapy (light treatments) with narrowband UVB (nb-UVB) light.

What is narrowband UVB phototherapy?

Phototherapy means “treatment with light.” UVB stands for *ultraviolet B* light. UVB is a natural light found in sunlight. It is helpful in treating skin diseases.

*Narrowband ultraviolet B (nb-UVB) treatment uses a special machine that emits **only** UVB light.*

What to Expect

- You will need to sign a consent form before starting your phototherapy treatments.
- Before each session, your phototherapy nurse will ask:
 - Have you had any reactions to your previous phototherapy treatments?
 - Are you taking any new medicines? Medicines can change your sensitivity to the light treatments. You must tell your nurse about all new medicines you are taking before each phototherapy session.

Personal Items

We may ask that you keep a long-sleeved shirt or other clothing used for each session at the Dermatology Center.

When you are done with treatment, or you stop having sessions for 2 months or more, you must take home all personal items you have left here. Dermatology staff may dispose of the items without notice if you do not collect them within 2 months of your last treatment.



The Phototherapy Unit at University of Washington Medical Center.

Short-term Risks

- After phototherapy, you can expect tanning, mild redness, and dryness in your skin.
- If you have any of these symptoms, call the phototherapy nurse:
 - Redness that lasts more than 24 hours
 - Blistering
 - Skin pain
 - Fever and chills

Long-term Risks

- *Eye damage:* Too much ultraviolet (UV) light can damage your eyes. We provide protective eyewear that you must wear during all phototherapy sessions.
- *Photoaging:* Repeated and prolonged exposure to UV light can cause early aging of the skin, including wrinkling and color changes.
- *Skin cancer:* Although the risk is low, there is an increase in skin cancer linked with UV exposure. Men who are treated with phototherapy may have an increased risk of skin cancer of the genitals. We provide a protective covering that men must place over their genitals during their phototherapy sessions.

Before Your Treatment

Before you have phototherapy treatments, please be sure that you agree with these statements:

- I have signed a consent form.
- I understand that having phototherapy narrow band UVB (nb-UVB) therapy carries some risks. I have received information from my healthcare provider about these risks.
- I will report any new medicine or unusual skin changes to the phototherapy nurse.
- I will visit the Dermatology Center for a yearly skin exam after I complete my phototherapy treatments.
- I understand that Dermatology staff may dispose of any personal items I left in the unit if it has been more than 2 months since my last treatment.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Dermatology Center:
206.598.4067 (press 8 when
you hear the recording)