Now that you and your Doctor have decided on UVB light treatment for your scalp using a Psoracomb, here is some useful information to help answer some of the questions you may have.

This leaflet aims to answer the most commonly asked questions, but please feel free to ask your Nurse or Doctor if you are unsure of anything.

**What is UVB?**
UVB means Ultraviolet Light B. These special wavelengths of light are included in sunlight. This treatment has been found to be particularly useful for many different skin conditions including psoriasis and eczema, and also for desensitising people with light sensitive conditions.

**What is a Psoracomb?**
This is a hand held comb device fitted with UVB lamps. It is used to treat scalp skin conditions such as psoriasis.

As it can be very awkward to treat your own scalp using the Psoracomb, we recommend that a friend or relative attend with you on Day 2 of the training programme, so they can be trained to use the Psoracomb. This will allow them to administer your treatment at home. A second person may not be required if your scalp condition affects areas that you can easily treat yourself. You can discuss this with the Nurse prior to starting treatment.

**What happens during the training programme?**

**DAY 1 (approximately 1 hour):**
A member of the phototherapy nursing staff will go through the nursing documents that need to be completed before you start treatment.

Before you begin treatment you will receive a test dose, called a MED (Minimal Erythema Dose). A number of doses of ultraviolet B light will be shone on small circles on your back or arm. This takes about 15 minutes and the results will be read the next day (approximately 24 hours later). This reading will help decide what dose your light treatment should be started at.

**DAY 2 (approximately 1 hour):**
The results of your MED test will be read before your first treatment. The person who will administer your treatment at home will attend with you and be shown how to operate the Psoracomb. Your first treatment will be administered under nursing supervision.

For most patients, 2 days of training is adequate but, if felt necessary, the Phototherapy Nurse will advise a longer training programme. Once the training programme has been completed, you will take the Psoracomb home with you.
**IMPORTANT:**
- Use the supplied electrical lead
- Do not use an extension lead
- Do not use the equipment in an area where it can come into contact with water, i.e. do not use the equipment in a bathroom

**How often should I use the Psoracomb to treat my scalp?**
You should treat your scalp every alternate (2nd) day.

**How long will I have UVB treatment?**
This varies from person to person, but an average course may last approximately 10 weeks. You will be assessed by a Doctor or Nurse every 4-5 weeks in the Phototherapy Unit at Ninewells Hospital, or at a local dermatology clinic (whichever is easier for you to attend). You may need to attend for further assessments during the treatment course. A Phototherapy Nurse will contact you every 2 weeks to make sure you are having no problems with the treatment.

**What about my creams?**
Please continue using your prescribed scalp treatment unless told otherwise. The Phototherapy Nurse will discuss this with you when you attend for training. During the treatment course use only the scalp treatments prescribed for you. Avoid application of scalp treatments less than 2 hours prior to using the Psoracomb as some may make your skin more sensitive, and others make your skin less sensitive, to the UVB light.

**Things to avoid**
- Fake tan products should be avoided for 3 days prior to and during your treatment course.
- On the day of treatment please avoid using perfumed products such as aftershaves and body sprays as these can make your skin more sensitive to the UVB light.
- You cannot use any Salicylic Acid preparation or moisturiser containing yellow soft paraffin before treatment as this can act like a sunscreen and stop the treatment working.
- During a course of treatment, you should take care when in bright sunlight. Sunbarrier cream, e.g. SPF 25 should be applied to exposed areas of skin, and protective clothing worn such as a hat and long sleeves.
- Severe haircuts should be avoided during your course of treatment. If necessary, have your hair cut prior to starting treatment or within the first two weeks.

**Unwanted side effects that could happen during a course of UVB**
- It is likely that you will get a mild sunburn reaction (erythema) at least once during your course.
- It is possible that you may get a spotty, itchy rash during your course (about 1 in 10 people do).
• Depending on your natural skin colour, if your skin goes brown easily in sunlight, you may develop a dark tan.

• Your skin may become dry.

If you experience any of these reactions, your moisturiser will help soothe your skin. If you develop a sunburn reaction (erythema), any discomfort, or an itchy rash please contact the nursing staff as soon as possible.

If you develop any problems following treatment phone the Photobiology Unit before treating yourself again. If immediate advice is required, nursing staff can be contacted in the Photobiology Department at Ninewells Hospital (see contact number below). If you should develop excessive discomfort or redness following treatment, advice will be given or an appointment made for you to be seen.

If you develop a severe erythema or pain outwith Ninewells clinic hours, do not continue treatment. Please contact Dermatology Ward 24, Ninewells Hospital where advice will be given or an appointment made to be seen (see contact numbers below).

Should you require advice regarding the unit (e.g. any technical problems, working of machine), please do not hesitate to phone the Photobiology Department during working hours.

**Unwanted side effects that could happen after a course of UVB:**

• **Skin cancer**

People who have a lot of sunlight exposure have an increased risk of skin cancer. In Scotland, approximately 1 out of 10 of us will develop skin cancer (it is worth noting that 8 out of 10 Australians have skin cancer at some time in their lives).

Although we do not know the risk of this particular type of ultraviolet light, if we assume that the risk is the same as sunlight, a course every year over the whole of a patient’s life would in general double the skin cancer risk. Many factors affect this. If you are not having your face treated this risk will be reduced.

• **Photoaging**

It is also possible, if you need many treatments, that you may develop sunlight induced skin changes with wrinkling and skin discolouration, similar to that of the ageing process or produced by cigarette smoking.

**Review**

You will be asked to attend your local clinic for a specific skin cancer review once you have received more than 250 UVB treatments.

**Final points**

• Before you start UVB treatment the Doctor and Nurse will check the medicines that you are taking. If your tablets (including anything you are taking over-the-counter) are changed during UVB treatment, please let the nursing staff know. This is because some tablets can affect the way the treatment works.

• When using the Psoracomb, you must wear the protective goggles supplied. If another person is administering your treatment they too must protect their eyes using the supplied glasses. Using the Psoracomb without the protective eyewear can damage your eyes. The person operating the Psoracomb must also wear protective gloves, as handling the unit
without them can cause a sunburn reaction to develop on the hands.

- Before using the Psoracomb, it must be warmed-up for 2 minutes. Protective glasses must be worn during the warm up time.

- After the initial warm up, begin treatment by parting your hair to expose the area to be treated. Hold the comb part resting on this area for the specified treatment time. For larger areas, continue parting your hair every 2cm placing the Psoracomb over each parting for the specified treatment time until all affected areas of your scalp have been treated. Your nurse will demonstrate how to do this on Day 2 of your training.

- Only use the Psoracomb with the comb attachment fitted. If the comb needs to be cleaned, it can be removed and washed in soapy water. Ensure that it is thoroughly dried before reattaching it.

- Treat yourself every alternate (2nd) day, with a 48-hour minimum interval between treatments. Always treat yourself at the same time of the day, with never more than 2 hours difference, e.g. if you normally treat yourself at 7 pm, then treatment should be between 5pm and 9pm.

- If you have a history of cold sores, total sunblock (e.g. SPF 50) should be applied to your lips prior to each treatment.

- Nobody, except yourself and the person administering your treatment, should be in the same room when the Psoracomb is switched on (including during warm up of the unit).

- The equipment is for the treatment of your scalp skin condition only. Do not use it on areas other than your scalp. Under no circumstances allow anyone else to use it as this could cause them to develop a severe erythema.

- When the equipment is not in use, you must ensure that it is switched off and unplugged from the mains supply. It must be stored in a safe place in its case, if supplied, out of the reach of children.

**Contacts**

**Nursing staff, Photobiology Unit**

Ninewells Hospital

Monday – Friday
7.30 am – 6.30 pm
Saturday
8.30 am – 12.30 pm
Telephone: 01382 632264
Mobile (use for text reviews only): 07950 708345
E-mail: homeuv.tayside@nhs.net

**Ward 24 (Dermatology Ward)**

Ninewells Hospital

After 6.30pm and weekends
Telephone: 01382 633824

**Joanna Campbell**

Lead Home Phototherapy Nurse
Telephone: 01382 496422

Psoracomb_patientinformation/hcameron/300817 Review Aug 2018
Now that you and your Doctor have decided on UVB light treatment for your skin condition using a Psoracomb, here is some useful information to help answer some of the questions you may have.

This leaflet aims to answer the most commonly asked questions, but please feel free to ask your Nurse or Doctor if you are unsure of anything.

**What is UVB?**
UVB means Ultraviolet Light B. These special wavelengths of light are included in sunlight. This treatment has been found to be particularly useful for many different skin conditions including psoriasis and eczema, and also for desensitising people with light sensitive conditions.

**What is a Psoracomb?**
This is a hand held comb device fitted with UVB lamps. It is used to treat scalp skin conditions such as psoriasis, but can also be used to treat other areas of the body.

**What happens during the training programme?**

**DAY 1 (approximately 1 hour):**
A member of the phototherapy nursing staff will go through the nursing documents that need to be completed before you start treatment.

Before you begin treatment, you will receive a test dose called a MED (Minimal Erythema Dose). A number of doses of ultraviolet B light will be shone on small circles on your back or arm. This takes about 15 minutes and the results will be read the next day (approximately 24 hours later). This reading will help decide what dose your light treatment should be started at.

**DAY 2 (approximately 1 hour):**
The results of your MED test will be read before your first treatment. The Phototherapy Nurse will demonstrate how to operate the Psoracomb. Your first treatment will be administered under nursing supervision.

For most patients, 2 days of training is adequate but, if felt necessary, the Phototherapy Nurse will advise a longer training programme. Once the training programme has been completed, you will take the Psoracomb home with you.

**IMPORTANT:**
- Use the supplied electrical lead
- Do not use an extension lead
- Do not use the equipment in an area where it can come into contact with water, i.e. do not use the equipment in a bathroom
**How often should I use the Psoracomb?**
You should treat the affected areas of your skin every alternate (2\textsuperscript{nd}) day.

**How long will I have UVB treatment?**
This varies from person to person, but an average course may last approximately 10 weeks. You will be assessed by a Doctor or Nurse every 4-5 weeks in the Phototherapy Unit at Ninewells Hospital, or at a local dermatology clinic (whichever is easier for you to attend). You may need to attend for further assessments during the treatment course. A Phototherapy Nurse will contact you every 2 weeks to check progress and help with any queries.

**What about my creams?**
Please continue using your prescribed treatment unless told otherwise. The Phototherapy Nurse will discuss this with you when you attend for training. During the treatment course use only the treatments prescribed for you. Avoid application of treatments less than 2 hours prior to using the Psoracomb as some may make your skin more sensitive, and others make your skin less sensitive, to the UVB light.

**Things to avoid**
- Fake tan products should be avoided for 3 days prior to and during your treatment course.
- On the day of treatment please avoid using perfumed products such as aftershaves and body sprays as these can make your skin more sensitive to the UVB light.
- You cannot use any Salacylic Acid preparation or moisturiser containing yellow soft paraffin before treatment as this can act like a sunscreen and stop the treatment working.
- During a course of treatment, you should take care when in bright sunlight. Sunbarrier cream, e.g. SPF 25 should be applied to exposed areas of skin, and protective clothing worn such as a hat and long sleeves.
- Severe haircuts should be avoided during your course of treatment. If necessary, have your hair cut prior to starting treatment or within the first two weeks.

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- It is possible that you may get a spotty, itchy rash during your course (about 1 in 10 people do).
- Depending on your natural skin colour, if your skin goes brown easily in sunlight, you may develop a dark tan.
- Your skin may become dry.

If you experience any of these reactions, your moisturiser will help soothe your skin. If you develop a sunburn reaction (erythema), any discomfort, or an itchy rash please contact the nursing staff as
soon as possible.

If you develop any problems following treatment phone the Photobiology Unit before treating yourself again. If immediate advice is required, nursing staff can be contacted in the Photobiology Department at Ninewells Hospital (see contact number below). If you should develop excessive discomfort or redness following treatment, advice will be given or an appointment made for you to be seen.

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People who have a lot of sunlight exposure have an increased risk of skin cancer. In Scotland, approximately 1 out of 10 of us will develop skin cancer (it is worth noting that 8 out of 10 Australians have skin cancer at some time in their lives).

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Review
You will be asked to attend your local clinic for a specific skin cancer review once you have received more than 250 UVB treatments.

Final points

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• When using the Psoracomb, you must wear the protective goggles supplied. If another person is administering your treatment they too must protect their eyes using the supplied glasses. Using the Psoracomb without the protective eyewear can damage your eyes. The person operating the Psoracomb must also wear protective gloves, as handling the unit without them can cause a sunburn reaction to develop on the hands.

• Before using the Psoracomb, it must be warmed-up for 2 minutes. Protective glasses must be worn during the warm up time.

• After the initial warm up, hold the comb part of the Psoracomb resting on the area to be
treated for the specified treatment time. For larger areas, you may have to carry out each treatment in more than one stage, by changing the position of the Psoracomb, to ensure that the whole area receives treatment. The Phototherapy Nurse will demonstrate how to do this on Day 2 of your training.

- Only use the Psoracomb with the comb attachment fitted. If the comb needs to be cleaned, it can be removed and washed in soapy water. Ensure that it is thoroughly dried before reattaching it.

- Treat yourself every alternate (2nd) day, with a 48-hour minimum interval between treatments Always treat yourself at the same time of the day, with never more than 2 hours difference, e.g. if you normally treat yourself at 7 pm, then treatment should be between 5 pm and 9 pm.

- If you have a history of cold sores, total sunblock (e.g. SPF 50) should be applied to your lips prior to each treatment.

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- The equipment is for the treatment of your skin condition only, and only to the area(s) specified by the Doctor/Nurse. Under no circumstances allow anyone else to use it as this could cause them to develop a severe erythema.

- When the equipment is not in use, you must ensure that it is switched off and unplugged from the mains supply. It must be stored in a safe place in its case, if supplied, and out of the reach of children.

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Ninewells Hospital
Out with clinic opening hours
Telephone: 01382 633824

**Joanna Campbell**
Lead Home Phototherapy Nurse
Telephone: 01382 496422