Pasient Information
Local PUVA Treatment

What is PUVA treatment?
Local PUVA is a medical treatment prescribed by a dermatologist. P stands for psoralen which is a plant substance that makes skin light sensitive. It comes in liquid form and the active ingredient is Meladinin. UVA (320 – 400 nm) is long-wave ultraviolet light that also exists in normal sunlight. Local PUVA is a combination of psoralen and UVA phototherapy. This treatment is used for psoriasis and some other skin disorders.

How is PUVA treatment conducted?
Meladinin is applied topically to limited areas such as hands or feet. Allow 15 min before those areas are then exposed to UVA light. Treatment is given 2 – 4 times a week for a total of 4 – 8 weeks.

The skin must be thoroughly cleaned after treatment to remove any psoralen residue.

How does PUVA treatment work?
We know that phototherapy reduces inflammatory cells in the skin, decreases the rate of cell division and has an immunosuppressive effect. Psoralen amplifies this effect. Phototherapy increases pigmentation and thickening of the outermost layer of skin.

Does local PUVA treatment have any side effects?
During and immediately following treatment, you may experience a stinging, throbbing or burning sensation or irritation in your skin. Use lotion/cream to soothe your skin if it is red or lightly burned. Sunburn can occur. Contact personnel if you become very red or experience strong stinging and irritation.

Local PUVA causes the skin to be light-sensitive for 2 – 3 days following treatment. Sun exposure can cause redness/sunburn and should therefore be avoided during treatment. Protect the treated areas of skin with clothing/gloves/shoes. Prolonged local PUVA treatment can increase the risk of skin cancer in the treated areas.

References:
- Br. J. Dermatol 154, 2006
- Phototherapy treatment protocols, Michael d. Zanolli, Steven R. Feldman, Adele R Clark, Alan B. Fleischer jr. (Copyright 2005)