

Phototherapy for Skin Conditions

Phototherapy (foe toe THER apy) is a special light therapy prescribed to treat some skin disorders. Phototherapy uses ultraviolet (UV) light. The phototherapy light booth (Picture 1) is similar to a standing-up tanning bed. It is operated by a trained nurse.



Picture 1 Phototherapy light booth

Before the therapy

Depending on the specific treatment area, the nurse will give you information such as which equipment will be used and what type of clothing your child needs to wear.

The therapy – what to expect

Your child will be registered at the front desk and brought back to the phototherapy room. He or she will be given goggles to protect the eyes. The child may need to apply sunscreen.

Your child will use either the phototherapy light booth or the hand/foot phototherapy unit (Picture 2) for the prescribed time. The unit that will be used depends on the part(s) of your child's body to be treated.



Picture 2 Hand/foot phototherapy unit

- For treatment of areas on the torso, your child will stand in the light booth for the required period of time.
- If he or she is receiving hand or foot therapy only, the child will place just the affected area(s) in the hand/foot phototherapy unit for treatment.

The nurse will turn the machine on once the child is in place. At the end of the therapy, the lights will shut off and the child may leave the machine.

Phototherapy treatment sessions can last from seconds to minutes. The amount of time spent in the phototherapy booth will gradually increase as tolerated by the child's skin.

Caregivers can expect to be at the office for 30 minutes per session. Sessions occur two to three times a week for two to three months. Depending on response, the child may continue on therapy for longer periods of time.

After the therapy

Watch your child at home for these possible side effects:

- Sunburn-type of reaction
- Tanning of the skin
- Rash
- Although rare, there may be an increased risk for premature aging of the skin or skin cancer.

Follow-up appointments

Your child will be scheduled for all of his or her treatment appointments at the beginning of therapy.

Treatments must be separated by intervals of at least 24 hours.

To have the best treatment results, your child should not miss appointments.

References: Images of the Phototherapy light booth and the Hand/foot phototherapy unit used with permission of *Daavlin Phototherapy Solutions for Psoriasis and Vitiligo*.