

Extracorporeal Photopheresis Procedure: What to Do Before, During and After Treatment

Two Days Before the Treatment:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid Alcohol

Reason: Having more fluids in your body helps your blood flow better during the treatment. Both caffeine and alcohol can cause your body to have less fluid.

On the Evening Before the Treatment:

- Eat a low fat meal
- Avoid fatty foods such as steak, burgers, fried foods, cheese, butter, cream, ice cream and rich desserts

Reason: High levels of fat in the blood may make the cell separation process more difficult, and could result in the treatment being stopped before it is completed.

On the Treatment Day:

- Eat light, low fat meals
- Do not skip any meals
- As restroom breaks are not allowed once treatment begins:
 - Drink as little fluid as possible during the few hours before the procedure
 - Visit the restroom right before the treatment so that you remain comfortable throughout the treatment

For 24 Hours Post-Treatment:

- Avoid sunlight
- Wear UVA protective, full coverage sunglasses and sunscreen

The Apheresis Outpatient unit is only open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

If you have any symptoms or concerns after leaving and the unit is closed, call the hospital operator at **703-776-4001** for the On-Call Apheresis Physician. The call center agent will contact the On-Call Apheresis Physician/Clinical Pathologist.

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Important Safety Information

Methoxsalen, the medicine used in photopheresis, should be given with special care to people with certain conditions.

You should not receive photopheresis if you have:

- Had an allergic reaction to methoxsalen, or any psoralen compound. Psoralen is a naturally occurring compound found in figs, celery, parsley, limes, bergamot, and parsnips.
- Any disease that involves sensitivity to light, such as systemic lupus erythematosus or albinism.
- A condition that makes you unable to tolerate blood volume shifts.
- A blood clotting disorder.
- Had the lens removed from either of your eyes, without a replacement lens being implanted.

Possible Side Effects of Photopheresis

Methoxsalen can make you more sensitive to sunlight for about 24 hours after the treatment. Taking the right precautions reduces the risk for cataracts (a disease that affects sight) or serious sunburns.

Protect your eyes and skin by taking the following simple but very important precautions for 24 hours after each treatment:

- Avoid sunlight as much as possible, even indirect sunlight through a window
- Wear sunscreen SPF 15 or higher indoors and outdoors when exposed to sunlight
- Wear UVA-protective, full-coverage sunglasses when exposed to sunlight

Other possible side effects are usually minor and go away within a day. These could include fatigue, a temporary increase in itchiness, or a slight fever or redness appearing 6 to 8 hours after treatment. As with any procedure that involves a needle puncture, there is a small risk of getting an infection.

Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about your potential risks.