Welcome to the Photopheresis (ECP) unit at Rotherham Hospital

Where are we located?

The Photopheresis Unit (ECP) is located on Ward B10 accessed via the Phlebotomy Dept. Level B.

Rotherham ECP is open 08.00-16.00hrs Monday – Friday.

If you wish to cancel or alter your treatment booking via our Secretary on the telephone numbers listed above.

What is Photopheresis?

Photopheresis is a safe therapy used to treat conditions where the white blood cells are thought to be the cause of the problem.

ECP Therapy is a light activated treatment of your white blood cells which takes place outside the body.

ECP treatment involves you, the patient being attached to a machine by central venous line or by inserting a needle into a vein in your arm.

Once attached: the machine draws and spins blood in a special centrifuge bowl to separate blood cells in order for us to collect the white cells and treat them.

Once white cells are collected, an intravenous drug called Uvadex (Methoxsalen) is added to them to make the T Cells sensitive to UVA light. Each treatment takes between 1-3 hours. Any cells not required are returned via the machine back to the patient while the white cells are processed.

The therapy is usually administered over two days. This can be two consecutive days or split over the week, moving forward the treatments may become be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The length of time you attend for ECP is decided by the consultant on an individual basis.
**Medication**

Please bring a comprehensive list of all you tablets currently being taken.

On the day of treatment please do not take the following medication:-

- Antihypertensive medication (tablets to lower your Blood Pressure)
- Diuretics (water Tablets)

This medication can be taken after the collection of cells.

Please contact the unit should any of the following apply:

- commencing blood thinning agents such as Warfarin or Low Molecular Weight Heparin (e.g Tinzaparin, Fragmin, Dalteparin etc)
- Medication changes

**Diet**

Two days prior to ECP therapy please observe a low fat diet and keep well hydrated.

Please inform the unit if you have been advised to take restricted fluids.

- Whilst receiving treatment certain foods may increase skin sensitivity. Foods such as Limes, Figs, Parsnips, Mustard, Carrots and Celery should be avoided if possible whilst having treatment (This is because these foods naturally contain Psoralen)

**Side Effects**

Photopheresis is a relative safe treatment with very few side effects however you may experience.

- Increase in redness of your skin
- Increase in itchiness
  - You may feel like you are starting with a fever, shivering, feeling hot and/or aching, this is because we have disturbed your Immune System, this feeling should only last for a few hours. However, if you continue to feel unwell or are worried at all and you have returned please do not hesitate to contact your usual hospital for advice.

**After-Care**

Once all your cells have been returned to you your skin and eyes will be very sensitive to sunlight or UVA light for at least 48 hours. We recommend that you use a **Total Sun Block** and **UVA treated Sun glasses** these should be wrap around if possible.
Deferral of Treatment

Sometimes treatment may need to be deferred. This may happen with any of the following circumstances / conditions.

- Low Haemoglobin below 10
- Haematocrit below 0.27
- Temperature 38° or above
- Low platelets below 20
- Vomiting or Diarrhoea until a stool sample is obtained and infection is ruled out
- Recent Blood clots (will not be able to treat for 6 weeks)
- Recent Heart Attack (will not be able to treat for 6 weeks)
- Shingles or chicken pox (cannot treat until all the lesions are dry)

Transport

Transport to the hospital can be arranged if required please inform our secretary of this when booking appointments

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