



Manhattan Beach Dermatology

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PHOTODYNAMIC ACNE TREATMENT WITH LEVULAN

Photodynamic acne treatment is a process by which a light sensitizing agent (Levulan) is applied to your skin. The Levulan is then activated by a specific wavelength of light.

Prior to photodynamic acne therapy, the best treatment option for severe acne was the prescription oral medication Accutane. However, with Accutane there are many systemic side effects including birth defects, liver abnormalities, depression, and virtually all patients develop severely dry skin and lips throughout their six month course. Photodynamic acne therapy provides a new alternative to conventional acne treatments.

The photodynamic acne treatment is done as follows: Levulan, a clear and painless solution, is applied to your skin and left on for 45-60 minutes. A topical numbing cream is then applied to your skin over the Levulan. After the 45-60 minutes the Levulan is activated with a bright light or laser that is flashed on the skin for 15 minutes. The photodynamic acne treatment works because the Levulan is absorbed by oil glands in the skin and the light activation destroys the oil glands. Skin oiliness is decreased, and the appearance of pores is minimized. The entire skin texture improves following photodynamic acne treatment.

The downside of photodynamic acne treatment is that you will have some redness and peeling of the treated areas for 5-7 days after treatment. You will also need to avoid sun exposure for 48 hours after the treatment.

The advantages of photodynamic acne treatment are rapid improvement and prolonged remission of acne lesions without taking a systemic medication. The skin also appears refreshed, less oily, and smoother. Some acne scars may also improve. We recommend 2-3 treatments at 3-4 week intervals to obtain optimal results. You can use your topical acne medications and cleansers in between your treatments once the redness has subsided.