Welcome to the Photopheresis (ECP) unit at Rotherham Hospital

Where are we located?
The Photopheresis Unit is located on Ward B10 accessed via the Phlebotomy Dept.

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

If you wish to cancel or alter your treatment booking via our Secretary ( see the numbers 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 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. Any cells not required are returned.

Once all the 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.

The treatment is a two day treatment. This can be two consecutive days or split days it may be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The length of time you attend for ECP is decided by the consultant on a patient by patient basis.

Medication
On the day of treatment please do not take any:-

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

This medication can be taken after the collection of cells.
Changes in medication: Please contact the unit for any of the following reasons:
- commencing blood thinning agents such as Warfarin or Low Molecular Weight Heparin (e.g. Tinzaparin, Fragmin, Dalteparin etc)
- diagnosis as having a blood clot
- prescribed warfarin
- please bring a list of medication changes

Diet: Two days prior to ECP treatment days please follow a low fat diet and keep well hydrated. You must 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)

Transport
A medi-car for transport to the hospital can be arranged if required please inform our secretary of this when booking appointments

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 48 hours. We recommend that you use a Total Sun Block and UVA treated Sun glasses (wrap around if possible)

Side Effects
Photopheresis is a relative safe treatment with very few side effects however there are a few side effects that you may experience. They are:
- Increase in redness of your skin
- Increase in itchiness
- You may feel like you are starting with a fever (shivering, hot 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 gone home you should contact your usual hospital for advice.

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 an 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)