

## Fact Sheet

### Active Acne with AFT Pulsed Light

**Please read this leaflet carefully this forms the basis of your consent for treatment. If there is anything you do not understand or are concerned about please raise this during your consultation.**

Acne is a very common condition and about 9 out of 10 teenagers will develop some degree of acne. In most cases, acne lasts about 4 or 5 years before resolving, however unfortunately it can continue to be a problem into and through the adult years. Acne may also present itself in later life commonly known as 'Late Onset Acne' when there has been no history of spots in the teenage years. Acne ranges from a mild, to very severe condition, the effects of which cannot be underestimated. We understand that living and coping with Acne can have a negative impact on your social, personal and professional relationships as well as reducing your own self-esteem

Our aim is to give you as much relevant and accurate data as possible to enable you to make an informed choice about whether or not to go ahead with the AFT Pulsed Light Treatment.

#### What causes acne?

- There are a number of small glands (sebaceous glands) lying just below the surface of the skin that produce oil (sebum) which seeps through tiny pores to keep our skin supple and smooth. This is a normal process but sometimes it goes wrong and this can be the cause of acne.
- The amount of sebum produced is increased during teenage years due to hormonal changes that take place at puberty. Some people however, make more sebum than others. Occasionally some drugs will cause excessive sebum production.
- The pores can become blocked due to the thickening of the top layer of cells in the pores and the shedding of skin cells, which then become lodged in the pores. Sometimes this is aggravated by external factors such as pollution and make up.
- Sebum collects under the blocked pores which swell to cause whiteheads and blackheads (comedones), these are small spots on the skin. The spots may enlarge into pimples (papules).
- Inflammation may develop around the blocked pores due to the immune reaction against the bacteria (*Propionibacterium. acnes*) that lives and multiplies in the sebum of the blocked pores. This process can lead to the formation of large spots (pustules, nodules and cysts)

#### What is the aim of treatment for acne?

The aim of treatment is to clear the acne and prevent any scarring. There are various treatments available that work in different ways including the following:

- Unplugging the blocked pores
- Killing or reducing the bacteria in the sebum and skin
- Reducing skin inflammation
- Preventing sebum being made

#### What treatment options are available?

- *Topical treatments* – can be used for mild acne or in combination with other treatments for moderate and severe acne. Most preparations work by unblocking pores, reducing bacteria and reducing inflammation. Many of these products can cause skin irritation and need to be used cautiously.
- *Antibiotics* – are used for moderate or severe acne. Antibiotics kill the bacteria in the sebum and skin. A 3-6 month course is usually required before the treatment is effective and the acne can return if treatment is stopped. Some people may find it difficult to take antibiotics for this long and sometimes the bacteria develop resistance to the antibiotic rendering it ineffective.
- *Hormonal treatments* – can be used for moderate and severe acne. They work by reducing sebum production but are not always well tolerated by patients
- *Isotretinoin (Roaccutane)* – can be prescribed for severe acne by consultant dermatologists only.. It reduces the amount of sebum produced by the glands and is usually very effective, but can have serious side effects

#### About the AFT 420 Pulsed Light Treatment

This Pulsed Light Treatment was developed by Alma Lasers for the treatment of Active Acne.

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Effective and comfortable, AFT Pulsed Light works quickly and thoroughly to kill acne bacteria. Destroying bacteria faster than they proliferate, AFT Pulsed Light counters acne better than any conventional method.

#### **How does it work?**

The high intensity AFT Pulsed Light permeates the tissue, reaching and precisely targeting the acne-causing bacteria. As the intense light penetrates the tissue, it sets off a chemical reaction in which endogenous porphyrins; ring-like molecules found in all living organisms, increase, attack and destroy the bacteria, stopping acne at its source.

#### **What type of acne can it be used for?**

The AFT 420 Pulsed Light has proven to be successful when treating the moderate and less severe forms of acne, where there is inflammation and bacterial activity. However, it may not be successful in treating the more severe cystic types of acne.

#### **How effective is it?**

Acne can be graded on a scale of 1 to 12 (Leeds scale for acne), with 1 being the mildest to 12 the severest cystic acne. Some people do not respond as well to Pulsed Light or Laser treatment and unfortunately there is no way of predicting this. However this compares favourably with the best antibiotic and isotretinoin treatment without the side effects. However, some people have reported their acne has completely disappeared after the first treatment. As with all medical treatments it is possible that not everyone will respond to treatment. Some patients may obtain a less than average response or may not respond at all.

#### **How quickly will it work?**

AFT 420 Pulsed Light is non-invasive and virtually painless treatment. Physicians can with some patients, effectively clear moderate inflammatory acne with 8-10 treatments over a couple of months. For some the acne does initially appear to get worse. This is much quicker than most other treatments. However you must be aware that a small number of people show no improvement. AFT Pulsed Light yields quick and impressive results without side effects, pain or photo sensitivity.

#### **How long will it last?**

The improvement appears to last on average for longer than 3 months, but there may be small outbreaks during that period which may be treated if required. If these outbreaks are treated then the improvement may last a longer period of time.

#### **Can I repeat the treatment?**

The AFT 420 is a Pulsed Light Treatment with very few side effects and therefore treatment can be repeated whenever it is required. Small outbreaks can be treated within weeks of completion of a course of treatment should it be required, although in most cases this should not be necessary.

#### **How is the treatment done?**

The laser operator will explain the procedure during the consultation. You will be treated by a doctor or a nurse. The treatment is straightforward, the AFT 420 Pulsed Light is delivered into the skin by pulses and this is applied to the skin affected by acne and surrounding area.

#### **Is it painful?**

You will only experience minimum discomfort during the treatment. You may feel a slight hot, prickly sensation followed by pleasant warm feeling. Treatment of bigger inflamed spots may be more uncomfortable and can feel painful.

#### **How long will it take?**

The treatment is quick. This will depend on the area to be treated, if the whole face needs to be treated than treatment can take up to 30 minutes. If only small outbreaks are treated then only a few minutes are required.

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#### **What side effects will I see?**

Some people especially those with sensitive skin may get a histamine reaction – which manifests as small red lumps (like a nettle rash) this settles within 6-48 hours. Your skin may feel dry and itchy shortly following the treatment. There are some reports that the spots can look worse in the first week of treatment with improvement happening later.

#### **What do I need to do before any treatment?**

You do not need to take any special precautions before the treatment; however as with all other Pulsed Light treatments remove all make up from the treatment area before treatment. We would not recommend treatment if you are tanned (fake or natural), so it is worth delaying any treatments until your tan has faded. Avoiding alcohol, aspirin and anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen for 24 hours before treatment helps to reduce the likelihood of bruising.

#### **What precautions do I take after?**

None – you can reapply make-up following the procedure. There is no need to avoid the sun and you can continue your usual skin care routine. We would however advise the use of a Sun Screen or Block (SPF 30+) generally for anyone undergoing Pulsed Light treatments and indeed the public in general.

#### **Can anyone have treatment?**

We would not recommend any laser treatments to pregnant or breast feeding women. We would not recommend treatment to anyone who has had adverse reaction to other laser treatments and would be cautious about recommending treatment to anyone who is photosensitive or has been taking photosensitive drugs or preparations. If you have been on Isotretinoin (roaccutane), we would recommend that you wait until 6 months after completion before having laser treatment.

#### **How much will it cost?**

The cost of the treatment depends on the area to be treated, our receptionists will be able to give you a rough idea of our current charges but we will be able to give you a much better idea once we have seen and assessed you.

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The cost of the treatment is dependent upon the area treated; whilst an approximate cost may be given the actual cost will be detailed within the consultation appointment.

**A consultation is required before embarking on any treatment regime, test patches are also undertaken.**

**A parent or guardian must accompany anyone aged under 18.**

#### **About the Clinic**

Laserase Bolton has been based at Bolton Royal Hospital since 1994. Throughout we have been fully registered with the appropriate governing body, who regularly inspects our clinic. You have the reassurance that your treatment will be conducted by a fully qualified and experienced doctor or nurse. All of our doctors and nurses have extensive training and experience; they are continually updated and assessed on new techniques.

We would be delighted to tell you about any treatments we offer - visit our website: [www.laserase-bolton.co.uk](http://www.laserase-bolton.co.uk)

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