



## PHOTOTHERAPY FOR THE TREATMENT OF ACTINIC KERATOSIS

### **How does the Blu-u with Levulan therapy work?**

Levulan is a topical medication that is applied to the face to make the skin more susceptible to light. This medication is applied to the affected area for up to an hour prior to exposure to the Blu-u. The patient is then exposed to the Blu-u light for 16 minutes and 40 seconds. This activates the Levulan which breaks down or destroys the actinic keratosis.

### **What is an Actinic keratosis?**

Actinic keratosis are rough, scaly, slightly raised growths that range in color from brown to red and may be up to one inch in diameter. Actinic keratoses (AKs) develop after year of sun exposure and are most common on the face, ears, hands, and forearms. 5% of AKs have the potential to become Squamous Cell Carcinoma (a type of skin cancer) so it is important to treat them. There are several different treatment options for AKs, which will be discussed at your visit.

### **What happens during a treatment?**

Patients sit comfortably in a chair while light is applied; there maybe slight burning and/or stinging. After treatment, there could be some temporary reddening and swelling where the actinic keratoses (sun damage) were present. This treatment will also bring out any sun damage that is under the skin that is not yet visible.

### **How many treatments will I need?**

The amount of treatments depends on the amount of sun damage the patient has. Studies have shown that most patients only need one to two treatments to get a significant reduction in actinic keratosis in a twelve month period. Patients may still need cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen in between Levulan treatments for maintenance.