

## Skin Protection and Dundee Cream

It has come to our attention that people in England have been experiencing problems obtaining Dundee Cream on prescription since the NHS stressed that sunscreens should not be routinely prescribed. Dundee Cream is different to a normal sunscreen, as it is a large-particle-size reflectant sunscreen, so it should still be available. However, pharmacists in some areas report that they can no longer select sunscreen options on their systems and patients are referred back to their GP.

GP practices in some cases have to refer to a committee to be able to prescribe it.

There are definite misunderstandings about the process:

- A prescribed sunscreen for severe photosensitivity, as for example in EPP, is allowed and nothing in the English NHS guidance has changed this.
- In the skin porphyrias, the problem is with visible light NOT ultraviolet which is why normal commercial sunscreens do not help much.

Specialists and Tayside Pharmaceuticals from Dundee are writing a letter, hoping that when this is published it could be referred to if someone is having difficulty obtaining Dundee Cream.

Unfortunately, people cannot simply purchase Dundee cream as it is a medicinal product, rather than a cosmetic, and can only be provided with a prescription.

While this is problematic, our advice is to be persistent. You may need to ask your GP to refer the case to a committee to enable it to be provided.

The following document might be useful in trying to persuade GPs/ CCGs to prescribe:

- The British Association of Dermatology list of recommended 'Specials' (page 11) states that reflectant sunscreens are recommended for photosensitivity disorders  
<http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=1848>

In the meantime, mineral sunscreens containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide offer a level of protection by providing a physical block to visible light. Generally, the larger the particle size, the greater the protection. So the creams that offer the greatest protection are likely to be thicker, messier and quite opaque (like Dundee Cream).

Our members have noticed some success with the following, although this is all trial and error and you may not find the same products work for you.

- Surf Mud natural zinc
- Invisible Zinc Broad Spectrum 50 SPF
- Neutrogena Sheer Zinc-Oxide Face dry-touch sunscreen 50 SPF

Dr Robert Dawe recently suggested that infrared protection cream might show to be useful to people with skin porphyrias due to the long wavelength that they target (even longer than visible light), and believes that this area requires further research. So although not confirmed, if you are happy to experiment with new things, it might be worth exploring this avenue with your specialist or dermatologist, especially in the absence of other availability.

We'd be interested to hear how you get along.