



## Actinic Keratoses

### What are Actinic Keratoses?

Actinic Keratoses are rough, scaly patches of skin caused by ultraviolet (UV) exposure. Damage from UV rays builds up over time, meaning that even short-term sun exposure on a regular basis can increase the risk of actinic keratoses. Actinic keratoses are often called **precancers** because they may transform into Squamous Cell Carcinomas.

### What is the best way to treat Actinic Keratoses?

The right answer is different for every patient. Treatment options include liquid nitrogen (freezing), topical chemotherapy (Efudex/ 5 Fluorouracil/ Fluorocal), or blue light therapy (PDT).

- **Cryotherapy** (liquid nitrogen): recommended when there are only a few lesions. The skin may blister and scab. There is a possibility of permanent discoloration (white spots).
- **Topical chemotherapy cream:** useful for treating many lesions and those with a history of skin cancer. You will experience temporary skin redness and irritation during this treatment. The topical medication does not cause typical chemotherapy side effects.
- **PDT** (blue light treatment): a field treatment for patients with multiple lesions. The treatment is administered in the office for a variety of body parts. After this treatment, you must stay out of the sun for two days. You may experience temporary redness and irritation up to two weeks.

## Topical Medication – Instructions for use

### Medication prescribed:

- ☐ **Fluorocal (5-Fluorouracil + calcipotriene)**
- ☐ **Efudex (generic: 5-Fluorouracil)**
- ☐ **Other** \_\_\_\_\_

- **Medrock Pharmacy** compounds **Fluorocal** for \$45. It contains an additional ingredient (calcipotriene) that is a topical vitamin D derivative. A pharmacy representative will call you within 24 to 48 hours to take your payment information, then ship the medication to you. Medrock Pharmacy Phone: (727)240-1341
- The cost of **Efudex/5-Fluorouracil** should not exceed \$50/tube. Please contact us if your cost is higher than that.

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**How to apply:**

1. Apply a thin layer of cream to the affected area \_\_\_\_\_ times/day for \_\_\_\_\_ days / weeks to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Avoid applying the cream to the corners of the mouth, too close to your eyes, or to the eyelids. If the medication accidentally gets into the eyes, wash it out with clean water.
3. After applying the product, wash your hands thoroughly.
4. Avoid prolonged sun exposure and always cover up and wear sunscreen.
5. Makeup can be applied 30 minutes after you apply your medication.
6. The medication is **extremely toxic for pets**. Keep it out of their reach.

**What to expect during the therapy:**

- Within a few applications, the treated area will become red and irritated.
- The skin may become itchy and scaly. You may experience mild pain, swelling, or tenderness. Some individuals may develop small skin breaks (erosions). These symptoms indicate that precancerous cells are being destroyed.
- Redness typically resolves within 2-3 weeks after treatment is completed. The skin left behind should be smooth and slightly pink.

**What to do for skin irritation:**

- Use a mild soap (Dove, CeraVe, Cetaphil) and do not scrub your skin.
- Apply Vaseline, Aquaphor, or Cicalfate cream to the area two to three times daily.

After you finish your treatment, if you are experiencing severe skin irritation, apply the following steroid cream (if prescribed for you):

- ☐ Hydrocortisone 2.5% topical cream to face – twice daily
- ☐ Triamcinolone 0.1% topical cream to body – twice daily

For your skin's health, it is worth preserving with the Fluorocal/Efudex/5 Fluorouracil therapy. Many years of sun damage can be reversed with this treatment.