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## **Actinic Keratosis**

With the passage of time, the effects of a lifetime of sun exposure become visible on the skin. This sun damage often shows itself on the face as dry, red, rough scaly areas. These areas are often detectable by touching with the fingers, even when they are not visible to the eye. The medical name for these red scaly areas is “actinic keratosis,” which means a scaly spot caused by sun damage. They are common, especially on the face, ears, scalp, forearms, and hands. While they are not skin cancer, they can turn into **squamous cell carcinoma (SCC)** if left untreated — so treating them is an important part of long-term skin health. This is usually done quite easily with one of the following methods:

- **Liquid Nitrogen**

Liquid Nitrogen is similar to dry ice and is essentially air that has been frozen to minus 196 degrees. Liquid Nitrogen can be sprayed onto the areas of damaged skin. This causes a temporary stinging or burning sensation. Afterwards, a scab will develop, fall off in about one week, and be replaced by fresher, healthier skin from underneath. Disadvantages of this treatment include the temporary burning sensation, the scabs that develop, and the fact that only a limited number of areas can be treated in one visit.

- **Efudex Cream**

This cream contains an anti-cancer medicine called “5-fluorouracil,” which is able to fight the scaly sun damaged areas. The cream is applied to large areas of the face for a few weeks (2-4 weeks). This causes all the sun damaged areas (what we see and what we don’t see) to become extremely red, angry, raw, irritated. When this happens, application of the cream is discontinued. After the red, raw, irritated areas have healed, the skin looks smoother, and the signs of sun damage are erased.

- Aldara or Zyclara Cream

This cream contains an immune-boosting medicine called “imiquimod” which is able to stimulate the body to reject the scaly sun damaged areas. The cream is in the affected areas for a few weeks. This causes all of the sun damaged areas to become extremely red, angry, raw, and irritated. When this happens, application of the cream is discontinued. After the red, raw, irritated areas have healed, the skin looks smoother and the signs of sun damage are erased. The cost of this treatment is more expensive.

- Efudex mixed 1:1 with Calcipotriol

This is a short but effective combination treatment that uses two creams — Efudex (a chemotherapy cream) and calcipotriol (a vitamin D cream) — to help your immune system clear damaged skin cells. It’s typically applied for just **5-10 days**, but during that time you may experience intense redness, peeling, and discomfort in the treated area. These reactions are temporary and a sign that the treatment is working. Despite the short duration, this approach has shown good results in clearing actinic keratoses and preventing new ones from forming.

- Photo Dynamic Therapy (PDT)

PDT is a light-based treatment that targets sun-damaged skin without surgery. A special cream (Metvix) is applied to the skin in the office and allowed to soak in for a few hours. After the incubation period has passed, the cream is then activated by a red light in the office. This destroys abnormal cells while leaving healthy skin intact. PDT is especially helpful for large areas like the face or scalp and offers the added benefit of **smoother, brighter skin** afterward. You may feel a stinging or burning sensation during treatment and have a few days of redness and peeling — but downtime is usually **minimal** compared to the other treatments, but the cost is more expensive.

\*Because there are several ways to remove sun damage, ask your doctor which method is right for you.



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## **Cryotherapy Aftercare**

### **1. What to expect**

Liquid nitrogen is extremely cold (-196.8 Degrees Celsius) . When sprayed on the skin, the top skin layer rapidly freezes. When you leave the clinic, the frozen site will probably be red and swollen, and may sting and itch as it thaws. This area may feel like a bug bite, or it might not have any symptoms at all after the thaw. The treated area will look worse over the next few days before it gets better. Swelling and/or blistering may develop within a day after treatment. Two or three days after treatment, a scab may form which will then take seven to ten days to heal and disappear. There will be pain while and shortly after the liquid nitrogen is applied, the treated skin may become red and swollen, and you may develop a blister (occasionally), scar (rare), temporary or permanent (rare) discoloration, or non-healing sores at treatment areas, such as the lower legs.

### **2. Aftercare**

Starting the day after your procedure:

- Wash the treated area gently with fragrance-free soap and water daily.
- Put Vaseline ® or Aquaphor ® on the treated area every day for 2 weeks. This will help the area heal and will keep it from crusting. If the treated area does develop a crust, you can put petroleum jelly (Vaseline ®) on the area until the crust falls off.
- SUNSCREEN daily - minimum SPF of 30+ to the area to protect it from scarring and pigmentation changes.
- Leave the treated area uncovered. If you have any drainage, you can cover the area with a bandage (Band-Aid®).
- Rarely, you may lose some hair on the treated area. This depends on how deep the freezing went. This hair loss may be permanent.
- You may have discoloration (pinkness, redness, or lighter or darker skin) at the treated area for up to 1 year after your procedure. Some people may have it for even longer, or it may be permanent.



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## **Efudex**

### **1. What is Efudex?**

Efudex (5-fluorouracil) is a topical chemotherapy cream prescription cream used to treat sun-damaged skin, specifically actinic keratoses (AKs) and superficial skin cancers. Efudex works by targeting and destroying abnormal cells so that healthy skin can regenerate in their place.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Do not use it if you have dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase deficiency, pregnancy, or breastfeeding.

### **2. How to Use Efudex**

- **ACTINIC KERATOSIS:** FIELD treatment - Covering a whole area of skin. Usually Efudex is applied twice daily to affected areas for 2-4 weeks. But you may be directed to apply it differently by your doctor.
- **SUPERFICIAL SKIN CANCER:** TARGET treatment - For these cases, efudex is applied twice daily for 4 - 6 weeks to the affected spot and a little bit around the spot. May continue under the direction of your doctor up to 10 to 12 weeks to ensure complete resolution of the lesion.
- **YOU WILL EXPERIENCE A SKIN REACTION, this is NORMAL and EXPECTED.** This treatment specifically targets pre-cancerous cells and sun-damaged skin, but has little effect on normal skin. In general, skin with more sun damage will have a more intense reaction.
  - For **ACTINIC KERATOSIS:** Treat for 2-4 weeks. You know to stop when there is severe irritation or skin breakdown is starting.
  - For **SUPERFICIAL SKIN CANCER:** If severe irritation or skin break down occurs, give it a few days break and apply Vaseline. Once the skin has healed, you can resume and complete the treatment.
- Treatment will result in healthier, smoother skin with a reduced risk of skin cancers.
- **REDNESS, SCALING, TENDERNESS, and OOZING** are normal responses. The cream is being taken up by the abnormal cells that are dying.
- Full healing may take up to a month post treatment.

### 3. Common Prescriptions for Efudex

- **ACTINIC KERATOSIS:** Efudex 5% cream apply to affected areas twice daily for 2 to 4 weeks. May extend up to 8 weeks for lesions on the trunk, lower limbs, hands or forearms.
- **SUPERFICIAL BCC:** Efudex 5% cream apply to the affected area twice daily for 3 to 6 weeks. May continue up to 10 to 12 weeks to ensure complete resolution of the lesion.
- **SCC in situ (off label):** Efudex 5% cream apply to the affected area twice daily for 3 to 4 weeks.

### 4. How to apply

- Before applying Efudex, gently wash the treatment area with mild soap and lukewarm water, then pat the skin dry with a soft towel. Avoid scrubbing or using harsh cleansers.
- Make sure your skin is completely dry before applying the cream. Using clean **fingertips** or a **non-metal** applicator, apply a thin layer of Efudex to the affected area, just enough to lightly cover the skin. Do not rub it in aggressively.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after each application unless you are treating your hands.
- Do not apply Efudex to broken skin, open wounds, or near the eyes, mouth, or nostrils.
- Let the cream absorb fully before dressing or going outdoors. It's best to apply Efudex at the same time each day to maintain consistent treatment.

### 5. Aftercare

- Once you've completed your Efudex treatment, your skin will begin to heal — often starting as pink, tender, and slightly raw. This is completely normal and part of the renewal process.
- Keep the area **clean, moisturized, and protected**. Use a gentle, fragrance-free moisturizer (like CeraVe, Vanicream, or plain petroleum jelly) to soothe dryness and support healing. Avoid picking or scrubbing the skin as it flakes or peels — let it shed naturally.
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible, and apply a **broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen** daily once the skin begins to re-epithelialize (usually 5–7 days after stopping treatment).
- Follow up with your doctor as planned to review your progress and assess for residual lesions.

**IMPORTANT:** You must use strict **SUN PROTECTION** during treatment and until skin is healed.



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## **Efudex with Dovonex**

### **1. What is Efudex with Dovonex?**

- **Efudex** (5-fluorouracil) is a chemotherapy cream that works by damaging the DNA of abnormal skin cells, leading to their destruction.
- **Dovonex** (Calcipotriol) is a vitamin D analog that helps activate the immune system in the skin, making it easier for your body to recognize and eliminate the damaged cells.

When used **together**, these medications create a **synergistic effect** — Dovonex “primes” the immune response, and Efudex enhances clearance of abnormal cells. The result is often **stronger immune engagement** and **faster treatment** compared to using Efudex alone.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Do not use it if you have dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase deficiency, pregnancy, or breastfeeding.

**This** is used to treat **ACTINIC KERATOSIS (AKs)** — rough, sun-damaged patches of skin that have the potential to progress into **squamous cell carcinoma** if left untreated. It is **NOT** used to treat superficial skin cancer.

### **2. How to use Efudex with Dovonex?**

- **This prescription is used for FIELD treatment** - The cream is applied to a whole area of skin to treat visible damage, but also subclinical unseen damage lurking below the skin surface.

**YOU WILL EXPERIENCE A SKIN REACTION, this is NORMAL and EXPECTED.** This treatment specifically targets pre-cancerous cells and sun-damaged skin, but has little effect on normal skin. In general, skin with more sun damage will have a more intense reaction.

**REDNESS, SCALING, TENDERNESS, and OOZING** are **normal** responses. The cream is being taken up by the abnormal cells that are dying. Treatment will result in healthier, smoother skin with a reduced risk of skin cancers.

Full healing may take up to a month post treatment.

### 3. Common Prescriptions for Efudex with Dovonex:

- **FACE:** Apply twice daily for up to 4-5 days.
- **SCALP and NECK:** Apply twice daily for up to 6-7 days.
- **FOREARMS, CHEST, LOWER LEGS:** Apply twice daily for up to 7-10 days.

Peak inflammatory effect of 5FUC is usually a few days after you finish applying it.

### 4. How to apply

Before applying, gently wash the treatment area with mild soap and lukewarm water, then pat the skin dry with a soft towel. Avoid scrubbing or using harsh cleansers.

Make sure your skin is completely dry before applying the cream. Using clean **fingertips** or a **non-metal** applicator, apply a thin layer to the affected area, just enough to lightly cover the skin. Do not rub it in aggressively.

Wash your hands thoroughly after each application unless you are treating your hands. Do not apply to broken skin, open wounds, or near the eyes, mouth, or nostrils.

Let the cream absorb fully before dressing or going outdoors.

### 5. Aftercare

Once you've completed your Efudex treatment, your skin will begin to heal — often starting as pink, tender, and slightly raw. This is completely normal and part of the renewal process.

Keep the area **clean, moisturized, and protected**. Use a gentle, fragrance-free moisturizer (like CeraVe, or plain petroleum jelly) to soothe dryness and support healing. Avoid picking or scrubbing the skin as it flakes or peels — let it shed naturally.

Stay out of the sun as much as possible, and apply a **broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen** daily once the skin begins to re-epithelialize (usually 5–7 days after stopping treatment).

**IMPORTANT:** You must use strict **SUN PROTECTION** during treatment and until skin is healed.