

5-FLUOROURACIL (EFUDEX)

5-Fluorouracil (Efudex) is a topical chemotherapy cream used to treat pre-cancerous and superficial skin cancers. The cream directly targets and eliminates pre-cancerous and cancerous cells from the skin while having little effect on normal skin cells. The area of atypical and pre-cancerous cells is destroyed, which leads to irritation, redness, inflammation, and may progress to scabbing, erosions, and tenderness. This is followed by a healing stage. These results show that the cream is working. After completing treatment, your skin will heal and may remain red for weeks. The entire healing process may take months.

Applying

Apply a thin film twice daily to the area your provider directed you to treat. Rub the medicine in until it disappears. Then wash your hands thoroughly. Typically, the medication is applied for 2-4 weeks but sometimes as long as 6 weeks for skin cancer treatment. Follow the instructions of your provider.

Expectations

Four to seven days after starting treatment, the sun-damaged areas treated will turn pink, then later red. Scaling, blistering and/or crusting will occur. Some areas may be tender. This reaction is expected and necessary for adequate treatment. After the treatment is stopped, you may use over the counter 1% hydrocortisone cream for 7-10 days to decrease the irritation of the reaction. Complete healing will require up to 1-2 months.



Other important information

1. Your skin will be more sensitive to the sun during and after treatment. Ensure proper use of sunscreen (SPF 30+) prior to sun-exposure to prevent further sun damage and sunburn.
2. If you miss a dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your normal dosing time.
3. Discontinue the medication and contact our office if you experience any flu-like symptoms. For concerns, please call our office at 843-723-6529.
4. Do not use other topical treatments, lotions, or ointments during treatment. You may apply Vaseline to help soothe skin and help with dryness and discomfort.

Follow Up

Your provider will want to examine the treated area 4-6 weeks after treatment has ended and the skin has had time to heal. Ensure that you have scheduled appropriate follow up.