



### **5-Fluorouracil (Efudex) Instructions and Care:**

5-Fluorouracil (efudex) is a topical cream used to treat actinic keratoses (pre-cancerous spots) and superficial basal cell carcinomas. It can be used almost anywhere on the body and is a great option to treat larger areas of affected skin. It specifically targets dangerous cells, causing them to shed, while leaving normal cells undamaged.

5-Fluorouracil comes as both a cream or a solution (for hairy sites like the scalp). A thin film of the medicine should be applied to the affected area once or twice a day (determined by your provider) and left on for at least 4 hours before washing off. We recommend washing before bed to decrease the risk of medication transfer to untreated sites.

Your provider has recommended you treat:

- LOCATION:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Temples/ forehead only
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Whole face
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tops of hands and forearms (knuckles to elbows)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Scalp
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Front of neck and chest
  - \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_
- FREQUENCY: \_\_\_\_\_ Once daily (morning) \_\_\_\_\_ Twice daily (morning & afternoon)
- DURATION: \_\_\_\_\_ weeks - Usually treatment is 2-4 weeks at a time for actinic keratoses and 6-12 weeks for superficial basal cell skin cancers.

During this time, you should:

- Avoid sun exposure as 5-Fluorouracil makes the skin more sensitive to the sun. If going outside, protect your skin with a zinc-based SPF30+ and clothing/ hats.
- Use Vaseline or Aquaphor in between medication applications to encourage healing and reduce itching. Use on any crusted sites.
- Expect redness, scaling, peeling, itching. Other common side effects are tenderness and occasional swelling. This is NOT an allergic reaction, but a result of the medication working. Less commonly, patients can experience a flu-like reaction with aching and fevers/ chills.

After treatment, it will take about another 2-4 weeks to completely heal from treatment. Redness can take longer to resolve. This is normal, and will resolve faster if diligent sun protection is used. You should not have any scarring from this treatment.

- If you have a robust reaction, over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream can be used, along with oral antihistamines. AVOID home remedies like alcohol, witch hazel, or essential oils on treated skin as these can cause irritation.

You should plan to follow up 2-3 weeks after your last application for re-evaluation and discussion of your response to treatment. Occasionally, stubborn lesions will require spot-treatment at this visit.