TOPICAL TREATMENT FOR ACTINIC KERATOSES

Actinic Keratoses (AKs), or pre-cancerous lesions on sun damaged skin, may be treated with topical therapy. This allows for the more thorough treatment of large sun damaged areas.

Common medications include: Efudex, fluoroplex or Carac (fluorouracil), Aldara or Zyclarla (imiquimod) or Picato (ingenol mebutate). The schedule of treatment will vary according to the medication and the extent of your sun damage.

Apply enough cream to cover the lesions, and be careful when applying near the eyes, nose, and mouth. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after each application.

Expectations are that the AKs will turn red, crust and peel and feel irritated in areas where lesions are being destroyed. This reaction eliminates the unhealthy cells and should not cause concern. Even though this stage of treatment may be unattractive and somewhat uncomfortable, it is important that you do not stop the therapy. The greater the sun damage, the greater the inflammatory reaction.

Keep treated areas clean by washing twice daily. Contact our office if you show any signs of infection; increased pain, redness, yellow crusting/discharge, or warmth in the affected areas. Keep your skin moisturized with a bland moisturizer (like Cetaphil or CeraVe) or you can use a thicker healing ointment (like Vaseline, Elta or Aquaphor) for the more crusted areas.

Once you have been seen by one of our practitioners and we have advised you to stop your topical treatment, it is important to follow our post care instructions.