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Treatment of Actinic Keratoses and Skin Cancer Fluorouracil (Efudex, Carac)

Fluorouracil is a chemotherapy drug (an antimetabolite) that interferes with the formation of DNA and RNA, which are essential for cell division and growth. This inhibition results in the death of quickly growing cancerous cells, which absorb more of the drug than healthy cells.

How to use Fluorouracil

The cream should be applied with your fingertips ____ times a day for _____ weeks. Wash your hands immediately after the application. Avoid contact with eyes, lips and nostrils unless otherwise advised by your healthcare provider.

What will happen to my skin during treatment?

The area to which you apply the cream will start to look worse in about one week with increased redness, crusts, itching and mild burning and tenderness. This means that the cream is working.

However, if you develop yellow drainage, yellow crusts, severe tenderness, fever or chills call your health care provider.

Can I apply anything else to my skin while using Fluorouracil?

If your skin feels dry and/or cracks you can apply Vaseline or Aquaphor between applications.

Do not wear makeup as this will irritate the area. Avoid sunlight as much as possible.

What happens once I stop the medication?

Apply Aquaphor or Vaseline to help the areas to heal. Wash your face twice a day with a gentle cleanser.

Everyone's healing time will be different. But it will usually take 1-2 weeks for the crusts to resolve and a few more months for the redness to resolve.

Return for your follow up appointment in ____ weeks so we can evaluate your results.