

ACTINIC KERATOSIS FIELD THERAPY OPTIONS

Treatment	Duration	Down time	Side Effects	Cosmetic Outcome	Cost	Comment
5-Fluorouracil (5FU or Efudex)	Twice a day 2 weeks (face) 3 weeks (scalp) 4 weeks (extremities)	1-2 months	Most vigorous inflammatory reaction -Itch, pain, ulceration -Scarring (rare)	Moderate	\$60 (40g)	-Longest history of use (50+ years) -Least expensive -Multiple protocols -Can be used as spot therapy
5-Fluorouracil +Calcipotriol (50:50 5FUC)	Twice a day 4 days (face) 6 days (scalp) 7-10 days (extremities)	2-4 weeks	Less vigorous inflammatory reaction then regular 5FU -Itch, pain -Ulceration (uncommon) -Scarring (rare)	Good	\$85 (10g) \$80 (20g) \$95 (30g) \$110 (40g)	-Not available as a commercial product -Similar effect as regular 5FU, but in a shorter time -Response more variable, length of treatment often needs adjustment -Can be used as spot therapy
Imiquimod 5% (Aldara)	3 times per week 4 weeks Consider repeat	2-4 weeks	Very vigorous inflammatory reaction Flu-like symptoms (rare)	Excellent	\$225/5g (Compounded) \$400/7.5g (Generic) \$490/7.5g (Aldara pump)	Immunomodulator (20 years of use) Range of reactivity based on genetics, protocol may need adjustment Highly targeted, optimal cosmetic outcomes Possible immune memory effect
Imiquimod 3.75% (Zyclara)	Daily for 2 weeks Stop 2 weeks Repeat	2-4 weeks	Less vigorous inflammatory reaction then 5% protocol Flu-like symptoms (rare)	Excellent	\$195/7.5g Compounded \$390/7.5g Zyclara pump	-Milder reaction during 2nd round of treatment (one round of treatment often sufficient) -Shorter duration of application -Simple application protocol
Diclofenac 3% in hyaluronate	Twice a day 60-90 days	None	Less irritation and inflammation than other topical agents	Good	\$70/50g -versabase gel \$140/50g hyaluronate	Very well tolerated -Can be used on extensive areas Not effective for thicker lesions
Photodynamic Therapy (Metvix)	Single day treatment Daylight (dPDT) -Outdoor light exposure Conventional (cPDT) -In clinic light exposure	7-10 days	Less vigorous inflammatory reaction -Very well tolerated but highly weather and protocol dependent (dPDT) -Painful for some patients without anesthesia (cPDT)	Excellent	\$495 -dPDT \$595 -cPDT	-Physician applied in clinic -Highly targeted, optimal cosmetic outcomes -Shortest treatment duration and downtime -Potential to treat extensive areas in one session

- 1) Efficacy is difficult to compare between treatment options because of variability in how it has been measured when studied. How effective a treatment will be is dependent on how it is applied, which can vary significantly from one individual to the next. On average, when treating low grade actinic keratosis, 70-80% of the lesions in a treated area will clear, and 30-50% of treated areas will clear completely, across all options.
- 2) Pricing is current spring 2021

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ACTINIC KERATOSIS

5FUC FIELD TREATMENT

Actinic keratoses (AKs) are rough, scaly areas of skin caused by long-term sun damage. They most often occur on the face, scalp and arms. When several AKs occur close together, the surrounding skin may also contain sun-damaged cells that are not yet visible. Field treatment treats the whole sun-damaged area rather than only the spots you can see.

Field treatment can clear visible AKs and treat milder sun damage between them. It is particularly useful when multiple, closely spaced AKs are present.

5FUC is a 50:50 combination of **5-fluorouracil (5-FU)** and **calcipotriol/calcipotriene**. It is prepared as a compounded medication and used off-label for actinic keratosis field treatment.

YOUR 5FUC INSTRUCTIONS

Unless your skin specialist gives you different instructions, apply 5FUC in a thin layer **twice daily**. Your prescription directions always take priority.

1. Clean the area

Gently wash the treatment area with warm water and a cloth. Allow the skin to dry.

2. Apply a thin layer

Using a clean finger or cotton swab, apply enough 5FUC to lightly cover the prescribed area. Rub it in gently until it disappears.

3. Treat the entire field

For field treatment, apply to all of the affected sun-damaged skin—not just the rough spots you can see.

4. Wash your hands

Wash your hands thoroughly after applying 5FUC, unless your hands are the treatment area.

5. Leave uncovered

Do not cover the treated area with a dressing unless specifically instructed.

HOW LONG DO I USE IT?

Treatment area	Typical duration
Face	4 days
Scalp / neck	6 days
Torso / extremities	7–10 days

Important: The source instructions recommend limiting the **first round for precancerous sun damage to 4 days**, then adjusting future treatment based on location and your skin's response. Do not extend the first course on your own.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Redness, irritation, scaling, itching, burning and tenderness are expected signs that the treatment is affecting sun-damaged skin. The inflammatory reaction may become strongest in the days after you finish applying the medication. The skin may look worse before it looks better.

STOP 5FUC AND CONTACT CENTRAL ISLAND SKIN if you develop very intense inflammation or any systemic symptoms. Symptoms that require contact include fever, nausea, diarrhea, headache or mouth sores. Increasing warmth, swelling and pain may indicate a skin infection and should also be assessed.

AFTER TREATMENT

- Start Vaseline, Aquaphor or an equivalent bland wound-care ointment after finishing treatment. Twice daily for about one week is usually sufficient.
- Avoid heavy facial makeup until any open areas have healed.
- Allow about 4 weeks between treatment cycles on the same area unless

your skin specialist instructs otherwise. **SUN PROTECTION**

5FUC-treated skin is more sensitive to sunlight. Use intensive sun protection during treatment and recovery. Mineral/physical sunscreens marketed for sensitive skin are suggested in the source instructions. Protective clothing and shade are also important.

Remember: 5FUC is a prescription compounded medication. This handout provides general information; follow the individualized instructions provided with your prescription.

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YOUR TREATMENT AREAS

☐ Face	☐ Scalp	☐ Neck
☐ Arms / forearms	☐ Hands	☐ Other: _____

