

# 5-Fluorouracil

## (Efudex, Fluoroplex, Carac, Tolak)

Your dermatologist has prescribed a medication called 5-Fluorouracil, also known by its brand names including Efudex, Fluoroplex, Carac, or Tolak. This is a topical chemotherapy cream which is used for the treatment of pre-cancers (actinic keratoses) and early skin cancers. It selectively targets the actively dividing cells of pre-cancers and skin cancers and will not affect normal cells such as moles and freckles.

### Precautions:

1. Please do not use this medication if you are pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant, or currently nursing.
2. If you suffer from cold sores, please notify your provider BEFORE starting treatment so that a prescription can be provided to prevent outbreaks during treatment.

### Instructions on using this medication:

1. Apply a thin layer of the medication (your provider will specify below)
  - a. Areas to treat:

Avoid the following areas: eyelids, corners of the mouth
  - b. Frequency of application:
  - c. Duration of treatment:
2. Wash hand thoroughly after applying the medication
3. Stay out of the sun and avoid sun exposure both during and after treatment as this medication makes you more sensitive to the sun. Wear sun protective clothing and apply sunscreen.

What to expect during treatment:

1. During therapy, the treated sites will typically become increasingly pink or red, scaly, and crusty. In some people, erosions (superficial breaks in the skin) can even occur. Most patients experience some degree of discomfort and irritation. **This is a normal reaction and is a sign that the treatment is working.**
2. You can cleanse the treated area daily with water and a mild cleanser.
3. You can apply Vaseline Petroleum Jelly or Aquaphor to the treated area.
4. You can apply cold compresses to help with the irritation and discomfort.

What to expect after treatment:

1. Even after discontinuing the topical cream, the redness, scaling, crusting and irritation will take weeks to fully resolve. You can continue treatment with Vaseline Petroleum Jelly or Aquaphor until all the treated sites have healed. You can also continue with cool compresses to help relieve any symptoms of irritation and discomfort.
2. After healing, the skin may still appear slightly pink; this is normal and will gradually resolve with time. Your skin should feel much smoother once it has completely healed from the treatment course.
3. It is most important to practice diligent sun avoidance and sun protection even after treatment is completed as the medication makes you more sensitive to the sun.

Call our office if:

1. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns during your treatment.