

Title: Actinic Keratosis: Patient Information

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Date: January 30, 2010

Key words: Actinic Keratosis, Solar Keratosis, Cryosurgery, 5-FU, Imiquimod

Abstract: Actinic Keratoses are precancerous skin lesions that are prevalent in the aging population. This brochure educates patients on the definition, causes, treatment and prevention of actinic keratoses.

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How can I prevent future AK's?

- The only way to prevent AK's is to protect your skin from the sun
- Wear a good sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 that blocks both UVA and UVB light
- Reapply sunscreen frequently
- Wear protective clothing such as hats, long-sleeved shirts and pants

Where can I get more info?

- <http://www.skincancer.org/Actinic-Keratosis-and-Other-Precancers.html>
- http://www.medicinenet.com/actinic_keratosis/article.htm

Actinic Keratosis

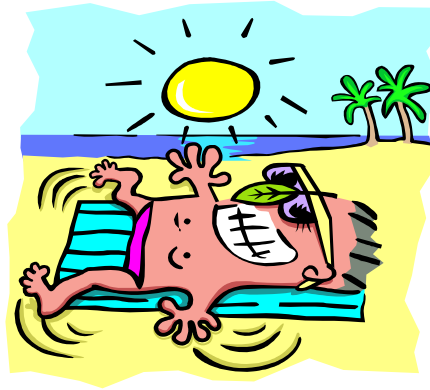
Information for patients



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What is an Actinic Keratosis?

- An actinic keratosis, or “AK”, is a precancerous lesion on the skin
- AK’s are usually rough, scaly, and pink/red in color
- They typically appear on sun-exposed areas, such as the face, neck, back, chest, and forearms
- Over time, AK’s can develop into a type of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma, or SCC



How did I get an AK?

- Sun damage to the skin from UV rays causes AK’s
- This damage accumulates over time, so AK’s are usually caused by sun exposure that occurred years ago
- Light or fair-skinned people are at higher risk
- The risk also increases with age. Most AK’s occur in people over the age of 50.

How is it treated?

- There are several options for treatment. You and your doctor will decide which is right for you. Some options include:
- Cryosurgery: freezing the AK with liquid nitrogen
- 5-FU (Efudex): a lotion that attacks cancerous cells
- Imiquimod (Aldara): a lotion that stimulates your immune system to destroy cancerous cells

