

5% 5-Fluorouracil cream (Efudix®) and calcipotriol ointment combination treatment

Your doctor has prescribed Efudix® and calcipotriol combination treatment for you. This combination treats pre-cancerous skin lesions called actinic keratoses caused by sun damage. Both treatments have been used separately for many years and are safe.

Efudix® is used to treat actinic keratoses and works by destroying sun-damaged skin cells, while leaving healthy skin cells intact. Calcipotriol ointment is a type of vitamin D and is used to treat psoriasis. Research shows that calcipotriol can enhance the effectiveness of Efudix® in treating actinic keratoses. It can also reduce the required treatment period from 28 days to four days.

Please read this factsheet carefully before you start using this combination treatment.

Applying Efudix® and calcipotriol combination treatment

- Follow your doctor's instructions on where, and when, to apply the combination treatment.
- The combination treatment is normally applied at the same time in the morning and at night for four days. Your doctor will advise on this.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after applying the treatment.
- Apply the Efudix® cream first, spreading a thin layer to the area of skin identified by your doctor
- If the sun damage is widespread you may need to treat small sections at a time – your doctor will advise on this. Use a maximum area of 5cm x 5cm per treatment, unless advised otherwise.
- Immediately after applying the Efudix® cream, apply the same quantity of calcipotriol ointment in a thin layer. Do not wait before applying the calcipotriol ointment as the purpose is to mix the two treatments in approximately equal quantities. Rub both creams in well.
- **Do not** apply to your eyelids or lips and avoid contact with your eyes and mouth. **Do not** apply to open cuts.
- **Do not** use Efudix® cream or calcipotriol if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you are allergic to any of the ingredients.

Skincare

- The affected areas can be washed or cleaned as normal.
- If the skin becomes very irritated during treatment, wash with water and a soap-free wash. Following this, apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) from an unopened container, using a clean fingertip.



- Sun protection is very important during treatment as Efudix® makes your skin more sensitive to sunlight which can make the reaction to the treatment more severe. Limit sun exposure during and after treatment, until the skin has healed. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or above) and protect the treatment area with a hat or clothing.

Side effects

We expect you to get a skin reaction in the treatment area because the cream selectively destroys the sun-damaged cells.

- The skin is likely to become red or inflamed and may weep or crust. This is normal and shows that the treatment is having an effect. Please continue to apply the creams if this occurs. The more sun-damaged the skin, the stronger the reaction will be.
- The skin reaction may continue for up to 10 days, even after you have stopped using the creams. Your skin may peel a little on day 11. Usually, the skin will be back to normal within two weeks.
- If the reaction is very severe, painful or more than you can tolerate, please **stop** the creams and contact the dermatology team.

Rare side effects

Please contact your dermatology team immediately if any of these occur:

- Skin infection at the treatment site.
- Stomach cramps, diarrhoea, vomiting, a swollen or sore tongue, mouth ulcers or a fever.
- Very rarely patients can be allergic to Efudix® or calcipotriol, which may result in a severe localised skin reaction. Seek immediate medical advice if you notice any symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, including a rash at other sites, itching or swelling (especially of the face, tongue or throat), severe dizziness or trouble breathing.
- Very rarely there is a small risk of ulceration which can lead to altered skin pigmentation or scarring. This is more likely on the lower legs.
- Overuse of calcipotriol can cause raised blood calcium levels so the weekly limit of 100g should not be exceeded. This is very unlikely with this combination treatment.

Keep the medication away from children and pets. Harm or death to pets may occur from licking treated areas on patients. If the medication is swallowed by an adult or child, please contact the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department at your local hospital.

Contact details

If you have any concerns during treatment, please contact us.

Dermatology nurses: 020 8915 6091

(Tuesday to Friday, 9am–5pm)

Alternatively, please call:

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899

(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)



Further information

5-Fluorouracil cream: www.bad.org.uk/pils/5-fluorouracil-cream/

Calcipotriol: www.patient.info/medicine/calcipotriol-for-psoriasis-dovonex

