

Fluorouracil 5% Cream

Fluorouracil 5% cream contains 5% Fluorouracil. It was formally known as Efudix®. This is used to treat pre-cancerous skin conditions (actinic keratosis) and early skin cancers such as Bowen's disease and superficial basal cell carcinomas. The cream works by selectively destroying sun-damaged skin cells, while leaving healthy skin cells intact. Please read this factsheet carefully before you start using this medication.

Applying Fluorouracil 5% Cream

- Follow your doctor's instructions on where, and when, to apply the cream
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after applying the cream
- The cream can be applied to an individual skin lesion or to the surrounding skin as well
- 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
- Wash the area of skin to be treated and apply the cream thinly, with a clean fingertip. Take extra care around the eyelids, nose and lips and avoid contact with the eyes and mouth. **Do not** apply to open cuts.

Skincare

- The affected areas can be washed or cleaned as normal
- Avoid products that can irritate the skin including scrubs or exfoliating products
- A non-perfumed moisturiser/makeup can be applied 20 minutes after applying **Fluorouracil 5%** if the skin is not broken or irritated
- If the skin becomes very irritated, wash with water or a soap-free wash and apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) from an unopened container, using a clean fingertip
- Sun protection is very important during treatment as **Fluorouracil 5%** cream makes your skin more sensitive to sunlight and can make the reaction to the treatment more severe. Limit sun exposure, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF30 or above) before going outdoors and reapply during the day. A hat/clothing can be useful to protect the areas being treated.

Side effects

- The cream selectively destroys the sun-damaged cells which results in redness/strong inflammation, erosions, oozing and crusting. This is normal and shows that the cream is having an effect. The larger the treated area, the stronger the reaction will be. These effects typically occur in the second week of treatment. On completion of treatment, it may take several weeks for the skin to heal.



- If the reaction is very severe, painful or more than you can tolerate, please **stop** the cream and contact the dermatology team. A steroid cream may be prescribed, or a short treatment break may be recommended.
- It is important to complete the full course of treatment (usually 3–6 weeks). If you are advised to take a break from treatment for a few days, restart the treatment where you left off and complete the prescribed number of days. Please do not start from scratch.

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 (less than one in 10,000 cases) patients can be allergic to **Fluorouracil**, which may result in a severe localised reaction
- Very rarely (less than one in 10,000 cases) there is a small risk of ulceration and resulting altered skin pigmentation or scarring.

Please keep the medication away from children and pets. Harm/death to pets may occur from licking treated areas on patients. If **Fluorouracil 5% cream** is swallowed by an adult or child, please contact your nearest hospital casualty department.

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 Hotline: 020 8915 6899
(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Further information

Further information is available from the British Association of Dermatologists.

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



Personal Treatment Plan

Apply **Fluorouracil 5%** cream morning / evening, daily / every.....days for.....weeks to the following areas:

Area 1: _____ Area 2: _____ Area 3: _____



