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Efudex Cream

You have been prescribed a cream called Efudex. This leaflet is designed to offer you further information about what the cream is used for, how to use it, and what side effects you should expect.

What is Efudex Cream?

Efudex cream is a cream that contains the chemical 5-fluoruracil. This chemical is proven to be active against early forms of skin cancer and pre-malignant skin conditions such as actinic (solar) keratoses and Bowen's disease.

When to apply the cream?

Apply either twice daily or once nightly after washing the area of skin that is to be treated. you will be told in clinic how often to apply the cream and where.

Where should I apply the cream?

The cream can be applied to either the individual skin lesion alone or to the surrounding area affected as well. If applied to the surrounding area, damaged skin that is not yet visible will also be treated. For best results, the different regions of the face can be treated at the same time, e.g. forehead and temples. N.B. The larger the area affected the more dramatic the redness and inflammation will be (see side effects).

Can I Use a Moisturiser as well?

Moisturizer may be applied 20 minutes after application of the Efudex cream. Please wash / clean affected areas as normal. If the skin becomes too irritated with treatment (see below) please use a soap free product to wash.

Should I continue with sunscreen?

Sunscreen is a very important part of treatment for photodamaged (sun damaged) skin to help prevent further damage. SPF of at least 15 should be applied at least daily before going outdoors. Sunscreen should be applied repeatedly during the day to maintain protection.

What are the side effects of Efudex cream?

The main side effect is skin irritation (dermatitis). The cream works by directly destroying the sun-damaged skin cells. This will cause intense inflammation, crusting and redness of the whole area treated. Inflammation is a good sign, as it shows the cream is having an effect. If the inflammation is too uncomfortable, a steroid cream can be prescribed to calm down the inflammation. Generally, the more intense the inflammation, the better the end result!

When should I start to see an effect?

The time for results to show will vary amongst individuals. The following is a guide as to when to expect results:

- * 1- 3 weeks Inflammation with crusting and redness of the skin
- * 3 - 6 weeks Skin inflammation settling down
- * 6 - 16 weeks Clearance of the sun damaged skin

Follow-up

It is generally recommended to follow-up with your family doctor. If the lesion returns after Efudex treatment, a biopsy is indicated.