

Topical 5-FU (Fluorouracil)

Names	The generic drug name is fluorouracil (flure oh your' a sill). Carac™ cream, Efudex® cream, Efudex® solution, and Fluoroplex® cream are brand names. There may be other names for this medication.
Why am I Using Fluorouracil?	Fluorouracil cream and solution are used to treat actinic keratosis - thick, rough, scaly spot(s) on your skin in areas that have been exposed to sunlight for many years. Actinic keratosis is not skin cancer, but if left untreated, a small percentage will become squamous cell skin cancer. The medication is sometimes used to treat superficial basal cell skin cancer.
How is Fluorouracil Used?	Fluorouracil comes as a solution or a cream to apply to the skin. Usually, it is applied to the affected areas twice a day. To help you remember to use fluorouracil, apply it around the same times every day.
How Does it Work?	Fluorouracil is in a class of medications called antimetabolites. It works by killing fast-growing cells such as the abnormal cells in actinic keratosis and basal cell carcinoma.
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have ever had an allergic reaction to fluorouracil• have, or have ever had, a DPD enzyme deficiency• are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning to do either <p>This medication may interact with other medications, increasing or decreasing their effectiveness or causing harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.</p>
What are Some Possible Side Effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burning, crusting, redness, discoloration, irritation, pain, itching, rash, or soreness at the area where you are applying the medication• Your skin may become sensitive to sunlight.• Uncommon: severe stomach pain, bloody diarrhea, vomiting, fever, chills

How Can I
Manage These
Side Effects?

- Plan to avoid any unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight and UV light (such as tanning booths). Wear protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors, even for a short time. If you develop a rash, do not put anything on it unless your doctor approves it.

When Should I
Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the uncommon side effects listed.

What Else Do I
Need to Know
About
Fluorouracil?

- Follow the directions on the label carefully – ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand.
- Use this medication exactly as prescribed – do not use more or less.
- For actinic keratosis, use the medication until the lesions start to peel off (usually 2-4 weeks). After your treatment is completed, it may take 1-2 months until the lesions are completely healed.
- For basal cell carcinoma, use the medication until the lesions are gone – usually 3-6 weeks, but it may take up to 12 weeks.
- During the first few weeks of treatment, the lesions and the surrounding areas will feel irritated and look red, swollen, and scaly. This is a sign the fluorouracil is working. Do not stop using this medication unless your doctor has told you to stop.
- Apply the cream with a nonmetal applicator, a glove, or your finger. If you use your finger, wash your hands very well immediately afterwards.
- Do not cover the treated areas with a bandage or dressing unless your doctor tells you to do so.
- Do not apply the cream or the solution to your eyelids, eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If you miss a dose, apply it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed application and continue on your regular schedule. **Do not apply a double dose to make up for a missed one.**
- Keep this medication in the original container, and keep the container tightly closed. Store it at room temperature, away from excess heat and moisture - do not keep it in the bathroom. Keep it away from children.
- Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed.
- If you would like more information about fluorouracil, talk to your doctor or pharmacist