

Information for patients

Why did my doctor prescribe EFUDIX?

Your doctor prescribed **Efudix** (fluorouracil) Cream because you have been diagnosed with a skin disease called actinic keratoses (AKs), also known as solar keratoses. These precancerous lesions are the result of years of unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Even if you have been extra careful about sun protection in the recent past, if you spent time in the sun when you were younger, you have put yourself at risk of developing AKs. Many adults have AKs, so rest assured that you are not alone.

What should I know about AKs?

AKs first appear as small tan, brown, or reddish-brown patches. They can be as small as a few millimetres, be flat or raised, and have a white scaly top that is rough to the touch. People can have 3 to 10 times as many subclinical lesions (AKs that are under the skin's surface and are not yet visible) as they do visible ones. Over time, AKs multiply and form larger patches on parts of the skin that are exposed to the sun (e.g. face, ears, bald scalp, hands, arms and legs). Left untreated, these precancerous lesions can develop into Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC), a potentially dangerous form of skin cancer that can spread to other parts of your body.

How does Efudix work?

It is believed that the active ingredient (fluorouracil) in **Efudix** interferes with cells ability to reproduce. AK cells as well as cancer cells, multiply at a much faster rate than normal cells. As a result, they absorb the medicine (**Efudix** cream) faster than the surrounding healthy cells. This is how **Efudix** can destroy the abnormal cells without harming any healthy normal cells.

What can I expect during treatment?

During treatment, the areas of your skin that have AKs will probably look and feel irritated. This is typical and should not cause you any concern. The redness, crusting, and peeling you see are signs that **Efudix** is working to eliminate the abnormal cells. While you may find this stage of treatment to be unattractive and somewhat uncomfortable, it is important that you **DO NOT STOP THERAPY**. You may also find that areas of your skin where there were no visible lesions may also become red and inflamed. The more AKs and abnormal skin cells you have, the more redness and inflammation you can expect during treatment with **Efudix**. In general, the worse your skin looks during treatment, the better the long term result will be.

How do I use Efudix?

You need to apply it to the affected areas twice a day – morning and evening. Use enough cream to cover the lesions, and be careful when applying near the eyes. You may apply **Efudix** with a non metal applicator, a vinyl/latex/plastic glove or your fingertips. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after each application.

Are there people who should not use Efudix?

Efudix is contraindicated (should not be used) in women who are or who may become pregnant during therapy as it may cause harm to the fetus. If you are nursing, be sure to let your doctor know as it is not known whether **Efudix** is excreted in human milk. **Efudix** is also contraindicated in rare patients with known hypersensitivity (known to be allergic) to any of its components.

Should I avoid the sun while using Efudix?

You should avoid sun exposure other UV light (such as tanning booths) during and immediately following treatment with **Efudix** because the intensity of the reaction may be increased. After your treatment with **Efudix** is completed,

be sure to use sunscreen on a daily basis to help avoid additional AKs from developing. Typically treatment in WA is carried out in the cooler months of the year, especially when large areas are treated.

How can I tell the difference between a normal or expected reaction to Efudix, and an allergic reaction?

If you have any concerns or questions about your reaction to **Efudix**, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can best assess whether your reaction to **Efudix** is normal or an allergic response. Remember a true allergic reaction is exceedingly rare.

How long will I have to use Efudix?

Patients being treated for AKs typically use **Efudix** twice a day for a period of 2 to 4 weeks.

What can I do to cope with the inflammation associated with Efudix?

Talk to your doctor, he or she can best advise you. There are a variety of over-the-counter and prescribed creams that can be used to help settle down the reaction.

Can I use cosmetics and moisturisers while using Efudix?

Moisturisers yes, though it is best to use very bland ones such as sorbolene or Vaseline. Make-up is okay though it may be difficult to apply as the reaction proceeds to its conclusion.

What should I do if I forget to use Efudix?

If you forget to use **Efudix** on day, simply resume using it as prescribed. Do not increase or double your dose.

How long after Efudix therapy will my skin look irritated?

This can vary depending on the number of AKs you have and the duration of your **Efudix** therapy. Generally speaking, your skin will begin to return to normal within 2 to 4 weeks after completing therapy.

I noticed some spots on my legs that I forgot to show my doctor. Can I use Efudix here too?

Only your doctor can determine if the "spots" you have are AKs and can be treated with **Efudix**. This is why it is so important to use **Efudix** only as directed and discuss any question you may have with your doctor.

What should I do with any Efudix that is left over after I complete therapy?

Keep it in a cool dark place.

What kind of follow-up care is needed?

Your doctor will want to see you after therapy is complete to assess how you are healing. A few follow-up visits may be necessary, but this is best left to the discretion of your doctor.

Are there any other things I need to know about Efudix therapy?

- Do not cover the treated areas with bandages or gauze unless your doctor advises you to do so. If treated areas are covered with a non porous dressing (a dressing that doesn't have any holes and can't "breathe"), normal areas of skin nearby may become inflamed. A porous (gauze) dressing may be applied for cosmetic reasons without an increase in inflammation.
- Do not share this medication with others, even if they seem to have the same condition as you.
- The most frequent side effects of **Efudix** cream occur locally and may include itching, burning, soreness, tenderness, scaling and swelling. If any of these side effects are severe, contact your doctor. Remember though, these effects usually indicate that your treatment is working well.
- Application to mucous membranes (e.g. mouth, eyes, vagina and anus) should be avoided due to the possibility of local inflammation, ulceration, and necrosis (the inability of tissue to heal).