

TREATMENT FOR ACTINIC KERATOSIS

This guide has been created to help you understand what actinic keratosis is, how the treatment works, and how to best care for your skin after treatment.

What is Actinic Keratosis?

Actinic keratosis is a skin condition caused by the harmful rays of the sun. It most often appears on areas of the skin that have been frequently exposed to the sun, such as the face, scalp, hands, and arms.

The condition appears as small, dry, scaly patches that may be pink or yellowish-brown and feel rough, like sandpaper. Over time, they may become thicker.

Actinic keratosis develops over many years and is most commonly seen in people with fair skin who sunburn easily. The lighter your skin, the higher your risk of developing actinic keratosis. Additionally, older men have an increased risk.

Most people with actinic keratosis do not experience symptoms. However, some may feel itching or a burning sensation in the affected area.

Why is Treatment Important?

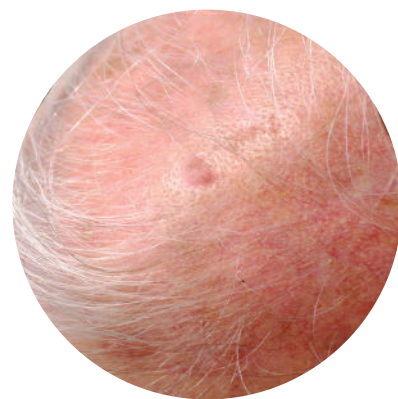
Actinic keratosis is not cancer, but it can develop into skin cancer if left untreated. The risk is low for a single lesion but increases if you have multiple lesions or have had significant sun exposure over your lifetime.

If you notice new rough patches or changes in existing ones, you should have them examined by a healthcare professional.

How is Actinic Keratosis Treated?

One effective method for treating actinic keratosis is freezing the lesion, also known as cryosurgery.

The treatment typically lasts between 8-10 seconds and may need to be repeated if deemed necessary by the healthcare provider.



Benefits of Cryosurgery:

- The treatment is quick and does not require anesthesia.
- It usually does not leave scars and provides good cosmetic results.
- It can be used on both small and larger areas, and multiple lesions can be treated at the same time.

What to Expect During and After Treatment

The treatment involves spraying the actinic keratosis directly for a few seconds, and it may be repeated up to two times.

During treatment, you may feel a brief stinging or burning sensation, which will stop once the procedure is completed.

After treatment, the skin may become red, tender, and swollen. This is a natural part of the healing process. In rare cases, small blisters may form. You should avoid popping blisters, as this increases the risk of infection.

Healing typically takes 1-2 weeks.

How to Care for Your Skin After Treatment

- Wash the area gently with mild, fragrance-free soap.
- Avoid using makeup in the treated area for 1-2 weeks, as it may irritate the skin and increase the risk of infection.
- Do not pick at the skin or blisters, as this can delay healing and increase the risk of infection.
- Protect your skin from the sun. Stay in the shade and cover the treated area with clothing. If the face is treated, wearing a hat can provide sun protection. Once the skin has healed, use sunscreen (SPF 50) to protect the new, delicate skin.

By following these guidelines, you can help your skin heal faster. If you experience severe pain, pus, or persistent redness, you should contact your healthcare provider.

Contact

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your doctor or dermatologist.

Check Your Skin!

Regularly examine your skin for new or changing lesions. Look for rough patches that do not go away or skin changes in color or size.

Use a mirror or ask for help to check areas you cannot see yourself.

If you notice anything unusual, contact your healthcare provider.