



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Fluorouracil and Calcipotriene Cream

This information explains what fluorouracil (FLOOR-oh-YOOR-uh-sil) and calcipotriene (kal-si-poh-TRY-een) cream is. It also explains how fluorouracil and calcipotriene cream is used for treatment.

Fluorouracil is sometimes called 5-FU.

About fluorouracil and calcipotriene cream

Fluorouracil and calcipotriene cream can be used to treat:

- Actinic keratoses (ak-TIH-nik KAYR-uh-TOH-sees). These are skin lesions (areas of diseased or injured tissue) caused by sun damage. They can be precancerous, which means they may turn into cancer in the future.
- Basal cell carcinoma, a type of skin cancer.
- Squamous cell carcinoma, a type of skin cancer.

Using fluorouracil and calcipotriene cream off-label

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of fluorouracil and calcipotriene on their own.

Your healthcare provider may prescribe 5% fluorouracil mixed with calcipotriene as a treatment for actinic keratoses. This is an off-label use of these medicines. Off-label use is when a healthcare provider prescribes using medicine in way the FDA has not yet approved.

Many dermatologists (skin doctors) prescribe fluorouracil and calcipotriene off-label in this way. Research studies show that using the medicines together can help treat actinic keratoses. The mixture is used because:

- Fluorouracil kills abnormal (not normal) skin cells, including precancerous cells.
- Calcipotriene helps start your skin's immune response.
- Using the creams together may help treatment work faster. It may also cause less long-term irritation than using fluorouracil alone.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

Safety information

Before using this cream, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Are allergic to fluorouracil or any ingredients in this cream.
- Have dihydropyridine (dy-HY-droh-PEER-ih-deen) dehydrogenase (deehy-DRAH-jeh-nays) deficiency (deh-FIH-shun-see), also called DPD deficiency. This is a rare problem that affects how your body uses fluorouracil.
- Are pregnant, may get pregnant, or are breastfeeding. **Do not use this cream if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.** This cream can harm an unborn baby. If your caregiver is pregnant, they should not help you put on the cream.
- Have a peanut allergy. Some mixtures may have peanut oil.

Use contraception (birth control) during treatment and for as long as your healthcare provider tells you after treatment ends.

This cream makes your skin more sensitive to sunlight. You may get a severe (very bad) sunburn if the treated skin is exposed to sunlight. While using this cream:

- Avoid direct sunlight. If you need to be outside, limit your time in the sun. Wear sun-protective clothing and a hat.
- Do not use tanning beds or sunlamps.

Pharmacy information

Your healthcare provider will send the prescription to Skin Medicinals Pharmacy, a specialty pharmacy, for filling and home delivery.

Skin Medicinals Pharmacy
147 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001

This pharmacy must talk with you before they deliver your cream. If you do not hear from them within 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days), call them at 312-535-3552.

What to do while you're using the cream

- Apply it as often as your healthcare provider tells you to. Most people use the cream twice a day.
- Treatment most often lasts 4 to 7 days.
- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions carefully. Your treatment plan may be different.

If you miss a dose:

- Apply it as soon as you remember
- Skip the missed dose if your next dose is due within 10 to 12 hours
- Do not apply extra cream

How to apply fluorouracil with calcipotriene

1. Wash your hands before using the cream.
2. Wash and dry the affected skin.
3. Wait 10 minutes after washing your skin before applying the cream.
4. Apply a thin layer only to the affected area. Rub the cream in gently.
5. Wash your hands after using the cream.

Do not:

- Cover the area unless you're in the sun or your healthcare provider tells you to. For example, do not put on a dressing (bandage) or wear a mask over the area.
- Wear makeup on the treated area.
- Use other skin products unless your healthcare provider tells you to.

Avoid getting the cream:

- In your eyes, nose, or mouth
- In sensitive parts of your body, such as your genitals
- On your eyelids
- On healthy skin

If cream gets into your eyes, nose, or mouth, rinse the area well with water.

How to store fluorouracil with calcipotriene

- Store at room temperature: 68 to 72 °F (20 to 22 °C)
- Do not freeze the cream
- Keep the cream away from moisture
- Keep the cream out of the reach of children or pets

What to do after you finish treatment with the cream

After treatment, your skin may stay irritated while it heals. To help your skin heal:

- Apply cool water compresses to the treatment area for 10 to 15 minutes, up to 2 to 3 times a day. You can make a cool water compress by soaking a clean cloth in cool (not ice cold) water.
- Apply a thin layer of cold Vaseline® or Aquaphor® ointment after each compress. Store them in the fridge to keep them cool. This may provide extra relief.
 - Do not use any other creams, lotions, or moisturizers unless your healthcare provider says it's OK.

Common side effects

Common side effects include:

- Redness
- Burning or stinging
- Dryness
- Swelling
- Pain or tenderness
- Skin forming crusts or scabs
- Itching
- Temporary skin color changes

Your skin may look worse before it gets better. This is expected and most often means the cream is working.

Redness and irritation often get worse during the first 1 to 2 weeks.

Your skin may take 2 to 4 weeks to heal after treatment ends.

Do not stop treatment early unless your provider tells you to.

When to call 911

Call 911 right away if you have:

- Severe pain or swelling
- Fever or chills
- Eye pain or vision changes
- Signs of infection, such as spreading redness, pus, or fever
- Signs of an allergic reaction, such as hives, swelling, or trouble breathing
- Severe bleeding or blistering

If you have questions or concerns, call your healthcare provider. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m., call 631-863-5118.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

About Fluorouracil and Calcipotriene Cream - Last updated on August 10, 2026

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center