

Managing Actinic Keratoses- Pre Cancers / Sun Damaged Skin

Sun damage to the skin can cause patches of red, scaly or crusty areas. These areas are known as 'actinic keratoses' 'solar keratoses' 'keratinocyte dysplasia's' or 'pre cancerous lesions'.

What we know is that some of these will eventually turn to skin cancer, and so these lesions should not be ignored, but should be treated using some method to destroy the pre cancerous cells.

The options for treating include-

- Creams that are applied to the skin
- Liquid nitrogen to freeze the area
- Photo dynamic therapy – where a cream is applied then activated by light to destroy the pre cancerous cells.
- Surgery to cut out the sun damaged area of skin

This table summarises the options available and the costs; which your doctor will discuss with you in more detail.

Product	Approximate Cost	Treatment Procedure	Length of Treatment
Cryotherapy/ Freezing	Doctor consultation fee	Liquid nitrogen applied by doctor	High cure rate, usually only one treatment required
Efudix Cream	\$65 per tube of cream	Cream applied to the area of sun damage, must stay out of the sun during treatment	Twice a day application of cream for two to four weeks
Aldara Cream	\$60-\$160 for tube or sachets of cream	Cream applied to the area of sun damage, must stay out of the sun during treatment	Three times a week application of cream for four weeks then review again with doctor
Photo dynamic therapy- Metvix	\$400 full face treatment	Cream applied at clinic, then sit in sunlight for 2 hours	Single treatment
Surgery	\$40 Procedure fee	If the doctor is concerned the sun damaged area may already be turning to cancer this option will be recommended.	Usually single procedure to remove the lesion.