

## Flourouracil Cream for Precancerous Change/ Non-Melanoma Skin Cancers

### What is this medication for?

Flourouracil cream is used to treat actinic or solar keratoses (scaly or crusted lesions [skin areas] caused by years of exposure to sunlight). Fluorouracil cream is also used to treat non-melanoma skin cancers. Fluorouracil is in a class of medications called antimetabolites. It works by killing fast-growing cells such as the abnormal cells in actinic keratoses and basal/squamous cell carcinomas.

### How should this medicine be used?

Fluorouracil comes as a cream to apply to the skin. It is usually applied to the affected areas twice a day. To help you remember to use fluorouracil, apply it around the same times every day. Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Use fluorouracil exactly as directed. Do not apply more or less of it or apply it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

- **For Actinic or Solar Keratoses:** continue using fluorouracil until the lesions start to peel off. This usually takes 2-4 weeks. Lesions may not be completely healed until 1 or 2 months after you stop using the cream.
- **For Squamous Cell Carcinoma:** use twice daily for 4 weeks.

During the first few weeks of treatment, the skin lesions and surrounding areas will feel irritated and look red, swollen, and scaly. This is a sign that fluorouracil is working. Do not stop using fluorouracil unless your doctor has told you to do so.

Apply fluorouracil cream with a nonmetal applicator, a glove, Q-tip, or your finger. If you apply fluorouracil cream with your finger, be sure to wash your hands well immediately afterwards. Do not cover the treated areas with a bandage or dressing unless your doctor tells you to. Do not apply fluorouracil cream or topical solution to the eyelids or the eyes, nose, or mouth.

## What precautions should I follow?

### **Before using fluorouracil:**

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to fluorouracil or any other medications
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking, especially other topical medications. Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you have or have ever had dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPD) enzyme deficiency (a lack of a naturally occurring enzyme in your body).
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while using fluorouracil, call your doctor immediately. Fluorouracil can harm the fetus.
- Plan to avoid unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight and UV light (such as tanning booths) and to wear protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Fluorouracil may make your skin sensitive to sunlight.

## What are the side effects?

Fluorouracil may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- Burning
- Crusting
- Redness
- Discoloration
- Irritation
- Pain
- Itching
- Rash
- Soreness at the site of application

Some side effects can be serious. The following symptoms are uncommon, but if you experience any of them, call your doctor immediately:

- Severe stomach pain
- Bloody diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Chills
- Severe red skin rash

