
Efudex

Why Did My Doctor Prescribe EFUDEX®?

Your doctor prescribed EFUDEX® (fluorouracil) Topical Solutions or Cream because you have been diagnosed with a skin disease called Actinic Keratoses, 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 for developing AKs. Many adults have AKs, so rest assured you're not alone.

How Does EFUDEX® work?

It is believed that the active ingredient (fluorouracil) in EFUDEX interferes with a cell's ability to reproduce. AK cells, as well as cancer cells, multiply at a faster rate than normal cells. As a result, they absorb the medicine (EFUDEX Solutions or Cream) faster than the surrounding healthy cells. This is how EFUDEX can destroy the abnormal cells without harming the 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 EFUDEX 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 lesions may also become red and inflamed. This is because abnormal cells can become inflamed even if the cells were not previously noticeable on the skin's surface. As a result, the more AKs and abnormal skin cells you have, the more redness and inflammation you can expect during treatment with EFUDEX.

How Do I Use EFUDEX®?

If you were prescribed EFUDEX Cream, you need to apply it to the affected areas twice a day — in the morning and evening. Use enough cream to cover the lesions, and be careful when applying near the eyes, nose, and mouth. You may apply EFUDEX with a nonmetal applicator, a suitable glove, or your fingertips. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after each application. If you were prescribed EFUDEX Solution, simply hold the container, which has a built-in applicator, against the affected areas and squeeze until a small amount reaches the skin. Be careful when applying near the eyes, nose, and mouth.

Are There People Who Should Not Use EFUDEX®?

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

Should I Avoid the Sun While Using EFUDEX?

You should avoid sun exposure or other UV light (such as tanning booths) during and immediately following treatment with EFUDEX because the intensity of the reaction may be increased. However, it is important to use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and wear protective clothing while being treated with EFUDEX. Be sure to wait 15 minutes after applying EFUDEX before applying sunscreen. After your treatment with EFUDEX is completed, be sure to use sunscreen on a daily basis to help avoid additional AKs from developing.

How Can I Tell the Difference Between a Normal Reaction to EFUDEX® and an Allergic Reaction?

If you have any concerns or questions about your reaction to EFUDEX, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can best assess whether your reaction to EFUDEX is normal or an allergic response.

How Long Will I Have To Use EFUDEX®?

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

What Can I Do To Cope With the Inflammation Associated with EFUDEX®?

Some patients find that applying petroleum jelly or topical cortisone cream helps. Talk to your doctor; he or she can best advise you.

Can I Wear Cosmetics or Use Moisturizers While Using EFUDEX®?

It is advised not to use cosmetics or any other skin products, including creams, lotions, and medications, while on EFUDEX therapy unless instructed by your doctor. The exception to this is sunscreen, which should always be used while you are being treated with EFUDEX.

What Should I Do If I Forget To Use EFUDEX®?

If you forget to use EFUDEX one day, simply resume using it as prescribed by your doctor. Do not increase or double your dose.

How Long After EFUDEX® Therapy Will My Skin Look Irritated?

This can vary depending on the number of AKs you have and the duration of your EFUDEX 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 EFUDEX® Here Too?

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

What Should I Do With Any EFUDEX® That Is Left Over After I Complete Therapy?

Discard any unused portion of EFUDEX after you have completed therapy. Do not share your EFUDEX with anyone else.

What Kind Of Follow-Up Care Is Needed?

Your doctor will want to see you after therapy is completed 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 EFUDEX® 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 nonporous 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 conditions as you.
- The most frequent side effects of EFUDEX Topical Solutions and Cream occur locally and may include itching, burning, soreness, tenderness, scaling, and swelling. If any of these side effects are severe, contact your doctor.
- Application to mucous membranes (e.g., mouth, eyes, vagina, anus) should be avoided due to the possibility of local inflammation, ulceration, and necrosis (the ability of tissue to heal).

To learn more, contact your dermatologist or one of the links to the right of this page.