



Actinic Keratosis

Actinic keratoses are common, sun induced, rough, scaly spots that increase with age. Light complexioned individuals are more susceptible than those with dark complexions. Years of sun exposure are required to induce sufficient damage to cause these. With time, a small percentage of actinic keratosis may convert to skin cancer. Methods of treatment include: Liquid nitrogen, superficial skin surgery using a curette (scraping instrument), chemical peels, 5 FU cream (Carac, Efudex or Flouroplex), Imiquimod (Aldarra, Zyclara), Picato, and Blue Light Photodynamic Therapy.

Once sun damage has progressed to the point where actinic keratoses develop, new keratoses may continue to appear even without further significant sun exposure. Nevertheless, wearing a hat, using a sunscreen with at least a 30 protection factor, and avoiding excessive sun exposure are important.

Any lesions that remain irritated, fail to disappear after treatment, bleed, or change rapidly should be checked by your dermatologist, as there is a clear risk of malignant transformation into squamous cell carcinoma, a fairly serious form of skin cancer