



What is Solar Keratosis? (Actinic)

Solar Keratosis is a premalignant, warty growth or lesion occurring on the sun-exposed skin. Occurring most often in the elderly, solar keratosis is also most likely to be found in people with blonde or red hair and light-skinned people. However, darker-skinned individuals may be rarely affected.

Solar Keratosis

Signs of solar keratosis include a thickening of the epidermis (top layer of the skin), characterized clinically by pink irregular, scaly lesions.

As is the case with all forms of skin cancer, early examination and treatment are important. Because some solar keratoses can develop into squamous cell carcinomas, it is important to have such lesions examined early by a dermatologist.

Can I Avoid This Condition?

The best way to avoid solar keratosis is to avoid overexposure to the sun. Chronic exposure to sunlight ages the skin and most commonly results in wrinkling and elastosis (yellow discoloration with small yellow nodules) and uneven over-pigmentation. The incidence of squamous and basal cell carcinoma (skin cancer) in light-skinned persons is directly proportional to the amount of yearly exposure to sunlight. These skin lesions are especially common in those individuals who were extensively exposed to sunlight as children or teenagers.

That means that it's a good idea to avoid sunlight during the brightest period of the day (10 a.m.-3 p.m.). Furthermore, a broad-spectrum sunscreen should be applied liberally to all sun exposed skin (including the lips) on a daily basis, even

cloudy days, and reapplied every 90 minutes during outdoor activities. Sunscreens should block both UVA and UVB rays and be rated SPF 15 or higher. Also, avoid tanning parlors and home tanning lights of any kind (self-tanning creams and sprays are OK). In addition, you should inspect all portions of your body regularly for any signs of solar keratosis. Finally, you should visit your dermatologist for a thorough skin examination.

So What Treatment Can I Expect?

After visiting with your dermatologist to obtain a skin examination, you may receive a diagnosis of solar keratosis. Your physician's choice of therapy will depend on the size, number, location, color, and surface characteristics of the lesion. Several effective methods are available to treat these lesions. Cryotherapy (freezing with liquid nitrogen) is rapid and one of the most commonly used therapies. Other treatments to improve chronic sun damage include topical ointments, creams or chemical peels.

Your dermatologist will discuss the treatment options with you.

Want To Learn More?

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Skin Pathology Associates, Inc., is a group of board-certified dermatopathologists. Our experienced staff includes a comprehensive array of disciplines in skin testing and diagnosis, supporting physicians throughout the Southeast. Further, Skin Pathology Associates operates under the guiding principle that speed is of the essence in evaluation and treatment. With this in mind, our technology and systems are built for rapid pickup, evaluation and report processing for your specimens.

While we do not treat patients directly, we provide invaluable assistance to your doctor by providing the most accurate possible diagnosis. All to provide you with the best possible outlook for recovery.



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