Actinic keratoses (Aks) are dry, scaly patches that form on the skin after years of sun exposure. Actinic keratoses lesions can take a variety of appearances, but they are usually scaly (feel like sandpaper) and range in color from skin-toned to reddish-brown. The lesions may be as small as the head of a pin or as large as a quarter (or bigger, if left untreated). Actinic keratoses develop on areas of the body that receive the most sun exposure, including the scalp, ears, face, lip, neck, forearms, and back of the hands. A single actinic keratosis may appear at first, but most people with one actinic keratosis will develop others. Actinic keratoses can appear in groups and may occasionally itch or become tender, especially after sun exposure. When actinic keratoses occur on the lip, they are referred to as actinic cheilitis; this type appears as cracking, dried lips, often around the border of the lip. Actinic keratoses are most common in individuals with fair skin and long-term sun exposure. They take years to develop and usually appear after age 40. However, even younger people (including those with dark skin) can develop actinic keratoses if they live in very sunny climates.

Are Actinic Keratoses Dangerous?

Actinic keratoses are considered precancerous and have the potential to become a type of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). Therefore, your doctor will be diligent in diagnosing, treating, and monitoring actinic keratoses. Also, since actinic keratoses result from chronic sun exposure, you are at risk for other types of skin cancer. Fortunately, actinic keratoses are treatable when detected in the early stages. People at risk for actinic keratoses and skin cancer can reduce that risk by performing frequent self-exams and seeing their doctor for regular screenings.

Now's the Time to Manage Your Damage

Levulan® Photodynamic Therapy (Levulan PDT) is an advanced treatment for actinic keratoses (AKs), or rough-textured, dry, scaly patches on the skin that can lead to skin cancer. Levulan PDT, a 2-part treatment course, is unique because it uses a light activated drug therapy to destroy AKs. Levulan® Kerastick® Topical Solution is applied to the AK. The solution is then absorbed by the AK cells where it is converted to a chemical that makes the cells extremely sensitive to light. When the AK cells are exposed to the BLU-U® blue light illuminator, a reaction occurs which destroys the AK cells. The short, 2-part treatment course is convenient and fits your lifestyle:

- Low downtime
- No prescription to fill
• No daily medication to remember
• Covered by most insurance plans
• Excellent cosmetic response

What to expect before, during and after Levulan® PDT treatment

Before Treatment Starts
• You may be asked to pre-treat the area with a topical Retinoid, this will prepare the area treated and make the treatment more effective.
• When treating AKs on the face microdermabrasion increases penetration of the Levulan and the light 4 times, this is an additional procedure not covered by insurance, also makes the treatment more effective
• Bring adequate sun-protective items with you to your appointment such as a wide-brimmed hat or umbrella.

The Levulan PDT Treatment

Treatment Step 1: Application of Levulan Kerastick Topical Solution
• Levulan will be uniformly applied to the area being treated for AKs.
• After one to two hours, depending on the area being treated, the second part of your treatment which includes illuminating your treated lesions with the BLU-U® blue light.
• You will need to stay indoors during this incubation time.

Treatment Step 2: BLU-U Treatment
• Your treatment with the BLU-U will take approximately 17 minutes.
• Protective eyewear should be worn during your BLU-U treatment.
• You may experience stinging or burning during your BLU-U treatment, but this should subside shortly after the BLU-U is turned off.

After Treatment
It is very important that you avoid outdoor light during the next 24 hours. Stay out of sunlight and bright indoor light. You may experience stinging and burning of the treated area for up to 24 hours, possibly longer in some cases. Some patients experience temporary redness and swelling of the treated skin, followed by peeling for one to two weeks after treatment.

Beginning the morning after your procedure, apply compresses of a dilute vinegar solution (2 tablespoons of distilled white vinegar in 1 quart of water) twice daily to prevent colonization of bacteria. Then, cleanse the treated skin with a mild cleanser and apply a moisturizer. Be certain that the moisturizer does not contain any chemical sunscreens or fragrance. We offer a post procedure kit, for purchase that contains products that are non-irritating and anti-inflammatory. These help you to heal more quickly. An alternative is a bland product such as Cetaphil. We also have available a thermal spring water spray containing antioxidants which is very soothing to the skin. You may begin using these products immediately following the procedure.
To relieve discomfort of the symptoms you may take Benadryl, aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory like Advil, Motrin or Aleve.

Do not use retinol or Retin-A, salicylic or glycolic acid products in the first few days while the skin is red and inflamed.

Christine D. Brown, M.D., P.A.
3801 Gaston Avenue Suite 302 ● Dallas, Texas 75246 ● (214) 828-0016 ● Fax (214) 828-4883
Christinebrownmd.com