

Actinic Keratoses

What are these rough spots on my face?

Actinic keratoses are rough gritty red spots that occur on sun-exposed skin. The face, including ears and scalp are among the most common areas affected. Hands and forearms are also common areas of involvement. These are often treated because a small fraction of these “precancers” may become true skin cancers over time. Approximately 10-15% of these rough spots may progress to form a squamous cell carcinoma.

How are actinic keratoses treated?

The treatment for actinic keratoses depends on the number of lesions, the location and the thickness of the spots. Possible treatments are:

- Liquid nitrogen
- Fluorouracil cream
- Imiquimod cream
- Photo Dynamic Therapy (PDT or Blue light)

What are the long-term effects?

Actinic keratoses can progress to squamous cell carcinoma. Avoiding the sun during peak hours of the day, wearing hats and long sleeve shirts, and applying sunscreen on the face SPF 30 or greater are essential for prevention.