



**SADDLEBACK**  
MEDICAL GROUP

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**ACTINIC KERATOSES**

Exposure to sunlight over the years injures the skin irreversibly. After enough exposure, the damaged skin begins to form red, rough, scaly plaques which may never heal. These are called Actinic (sun) Keratoses. Keratoses are pre-cancerous, and if neglected may become skin cancer. Management of keratoses is as follows:

**PREVENTION**

1. Wear wide brimmed hats and long sleeved shirts during exposure to midday sun (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.).
2. Always apply a sun screen cream to sun exposed areas every morning, each day. Sun damage is continuous and adds up even during the fall, winter, and spring months.
3. Use a sun stick or lipstick to protect your lips.
4. Use sunscreen with #15 SPF strength (not less). To ensure adequate coverage for both UVA and UVB light, purchase a sunscreen with *Parsol 1789* included. Examples are: Pre-sun Ultra<sup>®</sup>, Shade UVA Guard<sup>®</sup>, Ombrelle<sup>®</sup>, and Sol Bar<sup>®</sup>.

**TREATMENT**

1. Cryosurgery is a treatment in which liquid nitrogen is sprayed for several seconds onto individual lesions. A “burning” sensation lasts for a few minutes and is followed by redness, swelling, and often a blister. The area will flatten, dry, and peel off by itself in approximately two weeks. You may shower as usual using mild soap. Do not use any band-aids to cover the treated area. Makeup may be used on the scabs one they are dried. This treatment rarely causes a scar or loss of pigment. The use of sunscreen is advised immediately after the scab forms to help prevent pigmentary changes. It is not uncommon for some lesions to require a second treatment or for patients to develop new lesions several times a year.
2. Chemosurgery is the procedure used when there are too many lesions to freeze with liquid nitrogen, or the recurrences are too frequent. The use of chemicals such as 5-Fluorouracil, AHA, TCA, etc. are used on the skin to remove more extensive lesions. We will discuss this in depth if chemosurgery is warranted.

After treatment for Actinic Keratoses, please call our office if new lesions develop, or return when you receive your return appointment notification.