



Sound Dermatology

# ACTINIC KERATOSES

## What Are Actinic Keratoses?

Actinic keratoses (AKs) are rough, scaly patches on the skin caused by long-term sun exposure. They are considered precancerous lesions and can develop into skin cancer if left untreated.

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## What Causes Actinic Keratoses?

- Chronic sun exposure over time
  - Damage from ultraviolet (UV) radiation
  - Fair skin or history of sunburns
  - Increasing age
  - Weakened immune system
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## Common Symptoms

- Rough, scaly, or crusted patches on the skin
  - Pink, red, or skin-colored spots
  - Lesions that feel easier to feel than see
  - Tenderness, itching, or burning in affected areas
  - Commonly found on the face, scalp, ears, arms, and hands
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## Treatment Options

### In-Office Treatments

- Cryotherapy (freezing) to destroy abnormal cells
- Other procedures depending on the number and location of lesions

### Topical Treatments (Field Therapy)

- Medications applied to areas of sun damage to treat visible and unseen lesions
  - May cause redness, irritation, and crusting during treatment
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## How to Manage at Home

- Apply daily sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
  - Wear protective clothing (hats, long sleeves)
  - Avoid excessive sun exposure, especially during peak hours
  - Monitor your skin for new or changing lesions
  - Follow treatment instructions carefully
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## When to Follow Up

- If treated areas are not healing as expected
  - If new or changing spots develop
  - If lesions become painful, bleed, or grow rapidly
  - For routine skin checks as recommended
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## Key Points to Remember

- Actinic keratoses are caused by sun damage
- They are precancerous and should be treated
- New lesions may continue to develop over time
- Sun protection is essential to prevent future damage

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