

Urology department

# 5FU cream for penile cancer (fluorouracil 5% cream)

This information tells you about the treatment that has been recommended for you by your doctor. 5FU (fluorouracil) cream is a treatment for your condition. It is a medicine which is used to treat superficial pre-malignant or pre-cancerous skin lesions.

## Your medicine

Fluorouracil (5FU cream) is used to treat skin conditions such as growths of the skin (keratoses) and some simple skin cancers, and other skin conditions which may develop into cancer such as Bowen's Disease. The active ingredient, Fluorouracil, belongs to a group of anti-cancer medicines.

## How does it work?

Fluorouracil (5FU) works by destroying cancerous and pre-cancerous cells in the skin. If you have pre-cancerous or a small early stage cancer on the foreskin or end of your penis, your doctor may prescribe 5FU cream to apply to the abnormal area. The cream kills only cancer cells near the surface of the skin; it is not used to treat deeper cancers. Fluorouracil can be absorbed into the body even though it is prescribed for skin problems. When you first start to use the cream it is likely that you may get a skin reaction on the area of the skin you are treating. It is normal for this to happen with Fluorouracil cream.

## Side effects

You should always read the leaflet insert that accompanies the cream. You may get symptoms such as redness of the skin, inflammation, swelling and discomfort or pain. Let your doctor know if this happens. Painkillers such as paracetamol usually help with any discomfort. If your skin becomes much worse or you are worried speak to your Christie doctor or specialist nurse (key worker). You should always wash your hands when you have applied the cream. Do not share your medicine with other people. It may not be suitable for them and may cause them harm.

The pharmacy label on your medicine tells you how much cream you should apply and how often you should apply it. This is the dose your doctor has decided you should use. You should not change the dose of your medicine unless you are told to do so by your consultant or doctor. The usual direction for 5FU cream is:

- to apply a thin layer to the affected area as directed by your doctor once or twice daily for 2 weeks
- then have a 2 week break
- followed by applying a thin layer of the cream once or twice daily for 2 weeks
- then a further 2 week break and
- then finally 2 weeks of applying the cream daily.



We will usually review you in our outpatient clinic 12 weeks after you start the cream. If you feel that the medicine is making you feel unwell then you need to consult either your GP or your specialist nurse to seek further advice.

## **Taking other medicines**

If you are taking more than one medicine they may interact with each other. Tell your doctor the names of all the medicines that you are taking so that they can consider all possible interactions. This includes all the medicines which have been prescribed by your GP or your hospital doctor. You must also tell your doctor about medicines or health supplements which you have bought over the counter without prescriptions which you take on a regular basis.

## **Complementary preparations and vitamins**

Medicines can interact with complementary preparations and vitamins. In general, there is not a lot of information available about the interaction of medicines and complementary preparations or vitamins. If you are planning to take or you are already taking any complementary preparations and vitamins you should inform your doctor as there may be some known interactions with Fluorouracil.

If you experience any unusual effects while taking this medicine in combination with complementary preparations and vitamins, you should tell your Christie doctor.

## **General advice/information**

Depending on the affected area of the penis, for example, if this is on the under side of the shaft of the penis, it may be necessary to apply a simple barrier cream such as Sudocrem to the skin of the scrotum to ensure this does not become sore from the cream being applied to the penis. Applying a barrier cream to the scrotum should protect it from the 5FU cream.

Whilst you are using the 5FU cream it is recommended that a condom is used during sexual intercourse.

## **Further information**

The Christie cancer information centres have information on all types of cancer and support:

The Christie at Withington - **0161 446 8100**

The Christie at Oldham - **0161 918 7745**

The Christie at Salford - **0161 918 7804**

## **Maggie's centres**

The centres provide a full programme of practical and emotional support including psychological support, benefits advice, nutrition and headcare workshops, relaxation and stress management.

### **Maggie's Manchester**

Contact Maggie's on **0161 641 4848** or email [manchester@maggiescentres.org](mailto:manchester@maggiescentres.org)

The Robert Parfett Building, 15 Kinnaird Road, Manchester M20 4QL

### **Maggie's Oldham**

Contact Maggie's on **0161 989 0550** or email [oldham@maggiescentres.org](mailto:oldham@maggiescentres.org)

The Sir Normal Stoller Building, The Royal Oldham Hospital, Rochdale Road, Oldham OL1 2JH

## **Contact numbers**

If you have any other general worries when you are at home with regards to your 5FU cream treatment you can contact your urology clinical nurse specialist on:

Jane Booker - **0161 446 8018**

Steve Booth - **0161 918 2369**

Sharon Capper - **0161 446 3856**

Helen Johnson - **0161 918 7000**

## **Follow up appointments**

You will be given a follow up appointment to return to the clinic so that your doctors can assess the effect of your treatment, and to discuss further treatment/management of your care with you. During the times in between your clinic appointment you will be supplied with the contact number of the urology clinical nurse specialist/key worker. If you have any concerns do not hesitate to contact them.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **[the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net)**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week