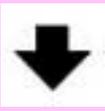


Decision Points

	Active Surveillance	Cryotherapy Liquid nitrogen	Photodynamic Rx (Blu Light)	Fluorouracil Imiquimod
What does this treatment involve?	You will get regular check-ups. If you change your mind you can opt for another treatment	Individual lesions will be frozen with liquid nitrogen	Application of a chemical plus Blu Light*	A cream will be applied to affected areas at night for ~ 4 weeks
Advantages	non-traumatic	quick, for limited number of spots	treats individual lesions in 2 stages	treats large areas
What are the goals of treatment?	Deferring treatment until lesions require therapy based on physician and patient judgment	Spot treatment of AKs	Spot treatment of AKs	Clearing large areas affected by AKs
How effective?	not applicable	Effective for spot Rx	Effective for spot Rx	Effective for field Rx
Side-effects	not applicable	redness, swelling, occasional color change	Marked pain, redness 3-4 days	dermatitis, may be severe
Costs	Office visit	OV + procedure code	\$500 - 600 per treatment*	5FU costs ~ \$100 - 250**
Frequency of doctor visits	1 to 2 per year	1 - 2 per year	1 - 2 per year	1 - 2 per year
How long before I return to normal appearance?	immediately	3 - 4 days	7-10 days	5-6 weeks

About Blu light: cost of procedure, not always covered by insurance

Cost of 5FU cream or imiquimod if insurance does not cover. [GoodRx](#) can save you money

The Cochrane Report on [Interventions for Actinic Keratoses](#) is worth reading. Despite the marketing hype, there is little difference between the modalities. An informed patient can make the choice of which modality suits her or his needs and expectations best.

There is no evidence that treating most actinic keratosis will prevent the development of dangerous squamous cell carcinomas. The decision to treat rests on how much the keratoses bother the patient or worries a concerned dermatologist. Treatment can allay some patients' anxiety. Treatment should not be done to make one's physician feel better or get richer. It is clear that in many cases, actinic keratosis are grossly over-treated.