

What Is Actinic Keratosis?

Actinic Keratosis, also known as Solar Keratosis, is a pre-cancerous lesion and is due to long-term exposure to the sun. Actinic Keratosis is a common lesion particularly in fair-skinned people.

What Causes It?

The most common cause is UV exposure over a long period of time and that is why an Actinic Keratosis is commonly found on exposed areas, such as head, arms, back of hands and neck. People who work outdoors or people who enjoy outdoor sports and hobbies have a higher risk of Actinic Keratoses, as well as fair-skinned people.

What to look for

The Actinic Keratosis lesion tends to appear as a small, pink/whitish scaly rough patch or spot in sun-exposed areas. It can feel rough and can cause irritation and can also cause cosmetic problems due to location.

What's the treatment?

Actinic Keratosis is a pre-cancerous lesion and if not treated has the potential to develop into Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC).

The common treatments for Actinic Keratosis:

- Creams - these can be applied to the skin
- Cryotherapy - freezing the Actinic Keratosis with liquid nitrogen
- Curettage & Cautery - the Actinic Keratosis is scraped away and the skin surface is sealed
- Photodynamic Therapy - available and used in some hospitals
- Surgery - not often used to treat Actinic Keratosis

What you can do

If you have any pinkish rough/scaly patches on sun-exposed areas, which are not healing or are changing in any way then get them checked out.

Follow the [SunSmart Code](#)

Remember that winter sun contains just as much damaging UV as summer sun.

Don't use sunbeds

