

San Luis Dermatology & Laser Clinic, Inc.

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PICATO

There is a new treatment for actinic (solar) keratoses, the scaly and crusty precancers that pop up on the scalp, face, hands, and arms. It is a plant extract, ingenol mebutate that comes from a plant genus known as Peplys. It has been marketed in Australia, where it was developed as Peplin®.

The advantage of this treatment is that it works very quickly: in 3 days on the face and 2 days on the hands and arms. It is so new that we don't know how it compares with 5-fluorouracil (effudex, flouroplex) or Aldara®, which are similar time-tested treatments, but the studies would indicate that Picato® treatment results are comparable.

Picato® comes in a gel form and it is packaged in small vials. Facial treatment involves three daily applications of a 0.015% concentration, hands and arms involve two daily applications of a 0.05% concentration. It comes in tiny little vials which seem like they couldn't cover the proposed area, but they do.

Instructions: Open day 1 vial and apply to proposed area of treatment. If treating the face, avoid the eyelids and folds. Put the remaining vials in the refrigerator. Repeat the process on day 2 and day 3.

Reaction: The skin will turn pink and burn, like a sunburn, progressively over the three days. There will be some facial swelling and it may be proportional to the sun damage. Anti-inflammatories such as Motrin® and Aleve® may help allay the discomfort. Aquaphor® healing ointment twice daily may soothe the skin.

The redness and scale will gradually fade over 10 days.