

### Topical Chemotherapy

- Topical chemotherapy is a field treatment used to destroy precancerous skin cells.
- Only apply to the **small area** directed by your provider. Using it on a large area can cause flu-like symptoms.
- **DO NOT** apply to a large area, as it can cause flu-like symptoms.
- There are several prescription creams that work as topical chemotherapy for precancerous skin changes such as Tolak, Carac, Klisyri, and Efudex. A similar treatment, imiquimod, works by stimulating the immune system rather than directly targeting abnormal cells. Fluorouracil (5-FU) can also be compounded with calcipotriene. If you are being prescribed the compound, it will be sent to a specialty compounding pharmacy.

#### **What to Expect:**

- Topical chemotherapy targets **abnormal (precancerous & superficial cancer cells)** cells only.
- If the skin is normal, you may have little or no reaction.
- If abnormal cells are present, expect redness, irritation, crusting, scabbing, and possible blistering in the treated area.
- This reaction means the medication is working.

#### **How to Use:**

- Apply a thin layer to the treatment area as instructed.
- Wash hands well after application.
- Avoid sun exposure during treatment and throughout the healing process

#### **When to Stop:**

- If the reaction becomes too uncomfortable, you may stop early and apply Aquaphor or Vaseline to the area until healed.
- Make sure to schedule a follow up appointment once healed if there are any scaly spots that persist.

#### **When to Call:**

- Severe pain, drainage, spreading redness, fever, or signs of infection.