

Clinical oncology

Fluorouracil cream for anal intraepithelial neoplasia (AIN)

What is anal intraepithelial neoplasia?

Anal intraepithelial neoplasia (AIN) is abnormal cells in the skin around or just inside the anus. It is important to monitor AIN as there is a small risk that it can transform into anal cancer over many years. Many people with AIN have no symptoms, but it can be uncomfortable with soreness, itching or occasionally bleeding.

How is anal intraepithelial neoplasia treated?

Some people will simply have monitoring of their AIN. In some cases the body can completely heal itself from AIN, particularly the first stage of AIN (AIN1). However, for those who have troublesome symptoms, some treatment may be recommended. The most commonly used treatments are surgical removal, laser treatment or skin ointments such as fluorouracil cream.

What is fluorouracil cream?

Fluorouracil (5FU) cream is a that is useful in the treatment that destroys some pre-cancerous conditions and skin cancers.

Using fluorouracil cream as prescribed

- Apply the cream at night time and then wash it off in the shower the next morning for 5 to 7 days.
- After 5 to 7 days, stop using the cream for approximately 5 days to give the skin a rest.
- Then use the cream again for another 5 to 7 days as in the first bullet point.
- Continue in this way as instructed by your doctor (normally for a total of 3 months).

Applying the cream

Using your fingers, rub a thin layer of the cream into the abnormal area of skin until it has been absorbed. You can leave the skin exposed to the air.

Always wash your hands immediately after applying the cream as it can irritate the skin of your fingers (or wear gloves to apply it).

Keep the cream well away from your eyes. Do not rub your eyes with fingers that have been used to apply the cream.

You and your partner should avoid sexual intercourse and touching around the area after the cream has been applied, as this may cause irritation to their skin.



Side effects of the treatment

After a few days the abnormal area will go red. There may be some soreness. Once the reaction has started, continue to apply the cream. If at any time the reaction is really unpleasant and sore, stop the treatment. If the redness and soreness does not settle down and you are worried, contact your consultant's secretary on the phone number below.

Your follow-up appointment

We will arrange a follow-up appointment in 3 to 4 months. You should stop using the cream 4 weeks before the appointment to allow the reaction to settle down and for the area to be reassessed properly.

At your follow-up appointment the consultant will:

- check if the cream has worked
- advise whether you should have another course of fluorouracil cream
- advise if a different treatment would be more appropriate

Contacts

If you have any concerns or questions, please phone your consultant's secretary:

Dr Lavin's secretary on **0161 446 8583**

Prof Saunders' secretary on **0161 446 3357**

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.

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



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