

ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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EGFR SKIN RASH

EGFR stands for “epidermal growth factor receptor,” which can be targeted by certain cancer therapies. A common side effect of EGFR cancer treatment is an acne-like skin rash that can occur mostly on the face, chest, back, arms, and scalp.

The rash may have the following characteristics:

- It may look like acne, but it is not.
- It may appear red, swollen, crusty, and very dry.
- It may feel itchy, tender, painful, warm, or burning.
- It may cause the skin to change color after the rash has gone away.

It usually starts and is worse within the first few weeks of treatment. It will go away after the treatment is stopped, but not right away.

To lessen the severity of the rash, do the following:

- Avoid direct sunlight on the skin by applying PABA-free SPF 30 sunblock and lip balm, and wear protective hats and clothing in the sunlight.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Avoid products with perfumes, alcohol, benzoyl peroxide, or salicylic acid (anti-acne products) because they can increase skin dryness and cause further irritation.
- Cleanse your skin regularly with a fragrance-free soap to keep the area from becoming infected. Ask your pharmacist or care team for specific recommendations.
- Limit showers with hot water because it can dry the skin. Instead, take short showers with warm water.
- After bathing, pat your skin dry, and while it is still a little damp, apply a non-fragrance body cream.

To treat the rash, your doctor may prescribe the following:

- A steroid cream to apply temporarily
- An antibiotic gel to apply to the affected area
- An antibiotic to take by mouth to help treat infection caused by the rash

Call your care team if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- The rash becomes itchy, tender, or painful or looks infected (red, warm to touch).
- The rash is affecting your ability to carry out your normal daily activities.
- The appearance of the rash is bothering you.
- The rash continues to spread despite current treatment.

Additional instructions

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