**Sun Damaged Skin**

With the passage of time, the effects of a lifetime of sun exposure become visible on the skin. This sun damage often shows itself on the face as dry red rough scaly areas. These areas are often detectable by touching with the fingers, even when they are not visible to the eye. The medical name for these red scaly areas is "actinic keratosis," which means a scaly spot caused by sun damage. These red scaly sun-damaged areas are not dangerous in the short term, but over a period of years they can develop into a mild form of skin cancer called "squamous cell carcinoma". Because of this danger, it is often best to have these red scaly sun-damaged areas removed by your Dermatologist. This is usually done quite easily with one of the following methods:

**Liquid Nitrogen** Liquid nitrogen is similar to dry ice, and is essentially air that has been frozen to minus 196

degrees Liquid nitrogen can be sprayed onto the areas of damaged skin. This causes a temporary stinging or burning sensation. Afterwards, a scab will develop, fall off in about one week, and be replaced by fresher healthier skin from underneath. Disadvantages of this treatment include the temporary burning sensation, the scabs that develop, and the fact that only a limited number of areas can be treated in one visit.

**Efudex Cream**

This cream contains an anti-cancer medicine called "5-fluorouracil," which is able to fight the scaly sun damaged areas. The cream is applied to large areas of the face for a few weeks. This causes all of the sun damaged areas to become extremely red, angry, raw, and irritated. When this happens, application of the cream is discontinued. After the red, raw, irritated areas have healed, the skin looks smoother and the signs of sun damage are erased.

**Aldara or Zyclara Cream**

This cream contains an immune-boosting medicine called "imiquimod" which is able to stimulate the body to reject the scaly sun damaged areas. The cream is in the affected areas for a few weeks. This causes all of the sun damaged areas to become extremely red, angry, raw, and irritated. When this happens, application of the cream is discontinued. After the red, raw, irritated areas have healed, the skin looks smoother and the signs of sun damage are erased.

Because there are several ways to remove sun damage, Ask your doctor which method is right for you.