

Erythrokeratoderma variabilis is an inherited skin disorder characterized by two features: short-lasting red patches in various sizes and shapes that may involve any part of the body; and thickening of the skin (hyperkeratosis). The hyperkeratosis can either be generalized, or localized as fixed, sharply defined, thickened plaques. The hyperkeratosis may also involve the skin of the palms and soles. Skin lesions are made worse by sudden changes in temperature and friction. The red patches may be accompanied by a burning sensation. Erythrokeratoderma variabilis is a rare inherited disorder of the cornification of the skin, which often presents at birth. Males and females are affected in equal numbers. There seems to be no predilection by race or ethnicity. Therapy is symptomatic and focuses on diminishing the build-up of skin (hyperkeratosis). Systemic therapy with oral retinoids is very effective, but has to be carefully monitored because of side effects. Moreover, the treatment is only effective as long as one takes the medication. After stopping treatment, the skin changes reappear within a short period of time. Topical skin care may include emollients and keratolytics such as; urea, lactic acid, glycolic acid, propylene glycol, salicylic acid, and topical retinoids preparations. Avoiding mechanical irritation of the skin can be beneficial.