

Imiquimod (Aldara)

About This Drug

Imiquimod is used to treat cancer. It is given topically (applied to the skin).

Possible Side Effects

- Itching
- Burning
- Redness
- Flaking/dryness
- Scabbing/crusting
- Swelling
- Hardened skin
- Excoriation/erosion (raw skin)
- Ulceration (blisters)

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 28% of patients treated with imiquimod. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Severe skin reaction to the affected and surrounded area, such as swelling, weeping (peeling off) and erosion (raw skin).
- Exposure to sunlight/light should be avoided, including sunlamps and tanning beds, due to increased risk of sunburn susceptibility. Patients with a sunburn should wait until fully recovered before using imiquimod.
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and tiredness
- Darkening or lightening of the skin, which can sometimes be permanent.

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

How to Take Your Medication

- Imiquimod should be applied as directed by your doctor. **Imiquimod is for skin use only. Avoid contact with the eyes, lips and nostrils.**
- It is recommended that imiquimod cream should be applied before bedtime and be left on your affected skin for approximately 8 hours, after which, you should wash away the cream with mild soap and water.
- To apply the cream, follow these steps:
 - Wash your hands with a mild soap and water, as well as the affected area of your skin and allow the area to dry thoroughly (at least 10 minutes).
 - Apply a thin layer of cream on the affected area and approximately 1 cm around the area
 - Rub the cream in until it is no longer visible
 - Wash your hands with a mild soap and water when you are finished applying the cream
- **Missed dose:** If you miss a dose, apply the missed dose of cream as soon as you remember and then continue on with your regular schedule.
- The treated area should not be covered up with bandages.
- **Storage:** Your medication comes in a single-use packet. Store this medicine at 39° to 77°F (4° to 25°C). Avoid freezing. Unused and partially used packets should be thrown away. Discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- Avoid sun and sunlamp exposure and use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors even for a short time. Cover up when you are out in the sun. Wear wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Keep your neck, chest, and back covered.
- To help with itching, moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of imiquimod with foods.
- This drug may interact with other medicines. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) that you are taking at this time. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills



- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Signs of severe skin reactions such as skin weeping (peeling off) or erosion (raw skin)
- Itching that is bothersome
- If you think you are pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** It is not known if this drug may harm an unborn child. For this reason, be sure to talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while receiving this drug. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this drug. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children.

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