



Dr Kate M Kelly

Skin Cancer & Reconstructive Surgery

Aldara: Application Instructions

What is Aldara?

Aldara (generic: Imiquimod) is a prescription cream that activates your immune system to target and destroy pre-cancerous and very early skin cancer cells. Because the cream uses your immune system to attack these cancerous cells, the effects of the cream often extend to areas of skin beyond where you have directly applied the cream.

What to expect:

In order to kill off the cancerous cells, your body must develop an intense inflammatory reaction. This means that after a few days of using Aldara, your skin may develop:

- Redness
- Itching and/or burning sensations
- Tenderness
- Scaling and/or peeling
- Blisters and/or weeping

THIS IS NORMAL - in fact, the worse the skin reaction, the better the cream is working to kill off cancerous cells! A few weeks after you finish applying Aldara, the skin will heal, and the old, rough, sun-damaged skin will be replaced with new, smooth, healthy skin.

How to use Aldara:

- **Wash** the areas to be treated with soap and water before applying Aldara.
- **Apply at bedtime** to the areas indicated by your doctor. Do not shower after applying Aldara, to avoid washing it off unintentionally. Avoid contact with eyes, nostrils, and mouth. Wash your hands with soap after applying Aldara.
- **In the morning, wash the cream off** with soap and water.
- **Avoid prolonged sun exposure** while using Aldara as it can worsen the effects and make you more prone to burning.

Call our office if:

- *You experience severe pain that is not controlled with Tylenol and/or Advil*
- *You develop a fever or severe flu-like symptoms while taking Aldara*
- *At any time you have questions or concerns and would like to speak to a nurse: we are here to help!*