



Dr A Anzarut, MSc, CIP, MD, FRCSC

**Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery
ASSH Fellowship trained hand surgeon**

**201 – 2763 Beverly Street, Duncan, British Columbia
Tel: (250) 597-2064
Fax: (250) 597-1297**

PATIENT INFORMATION FOR THE USE OF ALDARA 5% CREAM

Read this handout carefully before using this medicine.

- If any of the side effects gets serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor.

CONTENTS OF THIS HANDOUT

1. What Aldara cream is and what it is used for
2. Before you use Aldara cream
3. How to use Aldara cream
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store Aldara cream
6. Further information

1. WHAT IS ALDARA CREAM AND WHAT IT IS USED FOR

Dr. Anzarut may prescribe this for two different conditions:

- **Superficial basal cell carcinoma**

This is a common slow-growing form of skin cancer. It usually occurs in middle-aged and elderly people, especially those who are fair-skinned. It is caused by sun exposure. If left untreated, basal cell carcinoma can disfigure, especially on the face – therefore early recognition and treatment are important.

- **Actinic keratosis**

Actinic keratoses show up as rough areas of skin. They are also a result of sun exposure. Aldara should only be used for actinic keratoses in patients with a healthy immune system.

Aldara cream helps your body's own immune system to produce natural substances which help fight your basal cell carcinoma or actinic keratosis.

2. BEFORE YOU USE ALDARA CREAM

- Tell your doctor if you have problems with your immune system.
- Do not use Aldara cream on open sore such as an unhealed area of surgery.
- Avoid contact with the eyes, lips and nostrils. In the event of accidental contact, remove cream by rinsing with water.
- Do not apply the cream internally.
- Do not use more cream than your doctor has advised.
- Do not cover the treated area with bandages or other dressings after you have applied Aldara cream.
- If the treated site becomes too red, irritated or uncomfortable, wash the cream off with mild soap and water. As soon as the problem has stopped you may restart to apply the cream.
- Do not use sunlamps or tanning beds, and avoid sunlight as much as possible during treatment. Wear protective clothing and wide brimmed hats when outdoors.
- Whilst using Aldara cream and until healed, the treatment area is likely to appear noticeably different from normal skin.

3. HOW TO USE ALDARA CREAM

Wash hands carefully before and after applying the cream. Do not cover the treated area with bandages or other dressings after you have applied Aldara cream.

To reduce costs conserve the amount of cream used. Use a sterile pin to make a small opening in the sachet. Squeeze a small amount of the cream onto a tooth pick and use this to apply the Aldara cream. This will minimize the amount used each time and reduce the costs to you.

1. Apply the cream twice weekly [Monday and Thursdays].
2. Before going to bed, wash your hands and the treatment area with mild soap and water. Dry thoroughly.
3. Apply some cream to the tip of a toothpick
4. Apply Aldara cream to the affected area and 1cm (approx. 0.5 inch) around the affected area. Rub gently into the skin until the cream vanishes.
4. If any of the cream touched your fingers, wash your hands with soap and water.
5. Leave Aldara cream on the skin for about 8 hours. Do not shower or bathe during this time.
6. After about 8 hours, wash the area where Aldara cream was applied with mild soap and water.

4. POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

The frequency of side effects is classified as follows:

Very common side effects (likely to occur in more than 1 in 10 patients)

Common side effects (likely to occur in fewer than 1 in 10 patients)

Uncommon side effects (likely to occur in fewer than 1 in 100 patients)

Rare side effects (likely to occur in fewer than 1 in 1,000 patients)

Very rare side effects (likely to occur in fewer than 1 in 10,000 patients).

Like all medicines, Aldara cream can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. Tell your doctor if you do not feel well while you are using Aldara cream.

Some patients have experienced changes in skin colour in the area where Aldara cream was applied. While these changes have tended to improve with time, in some patients they may be permanent.

If your skin reacts badly when using Aldara cream, stop applying the cream, wash the area with mild soap and water contact your doctor.

In some individuals a lowering of blood counts was noted. A lowering of blood counts might make you more susceptible to infections, make you bruise more easily or cause fatigue. If you notice any of these symptoms, tell your doctor.

Serious skin reactions have been reported rarely. If you experience skin lesions or spots on your skin that start out as small red areas and progress to look like mini targets, possibly with symptoms such as itching, fever, overall ill feeling, achy joints, vision problems, burning, painful or itchy eyes and mouth sores, stop using Aldara cream and tell your doctor immediately.

A small number of patients have experienced hair loss at the treatment site or surrounding area.

If any of the side effects gets serious, or if you notice any side effects not mentioned in this handout, please tell your doctor.

Many of the undesirable effects of Aldara cream are due to its local action on your skin. Local skin reactions can be a sign that the drug is working as intended.

Very Commonly the treated skin may be slightly itchy.

Common effects include: pins and needles, small swollen areas in the skin, pain, burning, irritation, bleeding, redness or rash. If a mild skin reaction becomes too uncomfortable during treatment stop applying Aldara cream for a few days (i.e. to have a short rest from treatment).

Apart from reactions in the skin, other common effects include swollen glands and back pain.

Uncommonly some patients experience changes at the application site (discharge, inflammation, swelling, scabbing, skin breakdown, blisters, dermatitis) or irritability, feeling sick, dry mouth, flu-like symptoms and tiredness.

5. HOW TO STORE ALDARA CREAM

Keep out of the reach and sight of children.
Do not store above 25°C.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

What Aldara cream contains:

- The active substance is imiquimod. Each sachet contains 250 mg cream (100 mg cream contains 5 mg imiquimod).
- The other ingredients are isostearic acid, benzyl alcohol, cetyl alcohol, stearyl alcohol, white soft paraffin, polysorbate 60, sorbitan stearate, glycerol, methyl hydroxybenzoate (E218), propyl hydroxybenzoate (E216), xanthan gum, purified water.

What Aldara cream looks like and contents of the pack:

- Each Aldara 5% cream sachet contains 250 mg of a white to slightly yellow cream.
- Each box contains 12 or 24 single-use polyester/aluminium foil sachets.