

**IMIQUIMOD (ALDARA) CREAM  
TREATMENT FOR ACTINIC KERATOSES**

Imiquimod (Aldara) cream is a topical medication for the treatment of actinic keratoses. Actinic keratoses are the dry, red, scaling spots on the skin that occur as a result of sun damage. They often feel rough or sandpaper-like. They have an uneven texture. These lesions are not skin cancers but in rare cases may develop into skin cancers. Treatment of these lesions requires removal of the defective skin cells. The new skin then forms from the deeper layers which are free from sun damage.

Imiquimod is a new topical cream for the treatment of actinic keratoses. It is also used to treat warts. It works by stimulating your own immune system to destroy the lesions. This is an entirely different approach to the treatment of actinic keratoses. Imiquimod cream comes as a prescription in 12 or 24 small packages. Each package is good for multiple uses, depending on how much cream is required.

Apply a thin layer of imiquimod cream to the red, scaling spots at night. It should be rubbed in well. It is applied once per day at bedtime for 14 straight days and then discontinued for 14 days. These cycles can be repeated depending on the response to therapy. Since imiquimod comes in small packages, it works best if the individual package is poked with a pin and the package is then stored in a small plastic-type sandwich bag. This will prevent the medicine from drying out. It is best to wash your hands thoroughly after applying the imiquimod cream, and try to avoid contact with your eyes.

When using imiquimod, you may experience a degree of local redness or irritation around the individual actinic keratoses spots. This is an expected response and shows that the medication is working. If there is excessive irritation, then the treatment can be withheld for a few days and then restarted after the reaction subsides.

Imiquimod cream offers a significant advantage in the treatment of actinic keratoses by avoiding surgical approaches or liquid nitrogen. It may prevent additional lesions from developing. Please call the office if you have any problems using the medication. Please ask me any additional questions before you leave the office.