

# Imiquimod Cream

## What is Imiquimod?

Imiquimod (*pronounced Ih-MIK-wih-mod*) (brand name: Aldara) is a cream you apply at home. It helps treat sun-damaged skin and some early skin cancers. It works by stimulating your body's immune system to target abnormal precancerous and cancerous skin cells while leaving healthy skin mostly unaffected.

## Why Has My Doctor Prescribed Imiquimod?

Your doctor has prescribed Imiquimod to treat one or more of the following:

- Actinic keratosis (Solar keratosis or sunspots)
- Superficial basal cell carcinomas (BCC) – a type of early skin cancer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## What to Expect During Treatment

It is usual to develop skin changes and irritation at the site of treatment. This usually indicates that Imiquimod is working.

### Typical changes happen in stages:

<b>Week 1</b>	<p>You may notice the area becoming red, sore and inflamed. Even normal looking skin around the treated area may be affected.</p> <p>Some patients develop flu-like symptoms such as feeling generally unwell, headache, nausea, mild fever, muscle pain and swollen lymph nodes. Taking Paracetamol can be helpful.</p>
<b>Week 2 - 3</b>	<p>Your skin may start to weep, peel, crack, blister or even scab over. The area may be itchy or sore and burning. The skin reaction tends to be worst in during this period.</p>
<b>After 3 weeks</b>	<p>The treated skin will continue to be red and may crust. Some redness can persist even after you stop applying the medication.</p>
<b>After treatment</b>	<p>Most people's skin heals in 1-2 months, though recovery may vary depending on how many spots were treated and the duration of therapy.</p> <p>It is normal for redness and some crusting to persist around 2 weeks after treatment course has finished</p>

## When to Stop Treatment

**Stop using Imiquimod and contact your doctor immediately if you notice:**

- Severe pain, blistering or ulceration at treatment site
- Skin infection at treatment area
- Severe systemic symptoms

Rare allergic reactions or risk of ulceration resulting in altered skin pigmentation or scarring may occur.

**Contact your doctor or the dermatology team if you have any concerns.**

## How to Apply Imiquimod

**Follow your doctor's instructions carefully:**

Evening is best – apply the skin before bedtime. Pat the area dry and wait 10-15 minutes to allow your skin to completely dry

• **Clean the treatment area with water only, avoid soap as this might irritate your skin**

1. Pat the area dry and wait 10-15 minutes to allow your skin to completely dry
2. Apply a thin layer of Imiquimod over the affected area and about 1cm around it using a cotton bud or glove. Leave it on your skin overnight (between 6 – 10 hours)
  - **Avoid contact with eyes, nostrils and lips.**
  - **Treat no more than two palm-sized areas each application**
3. Wash your hands thoroughly immediately after using Imiquimod
4. Remove the cream in the morning using a gentle cleanser and water.

### Important Precautions

- **Do not apply Imiquimod to broken skin or open cuts**
- **Do not cover the treated areas unless instructed**
- **Do not use if allergic to any ingredients**
- **Do not use if pregnant or may become pregnant or breastfeeding.**

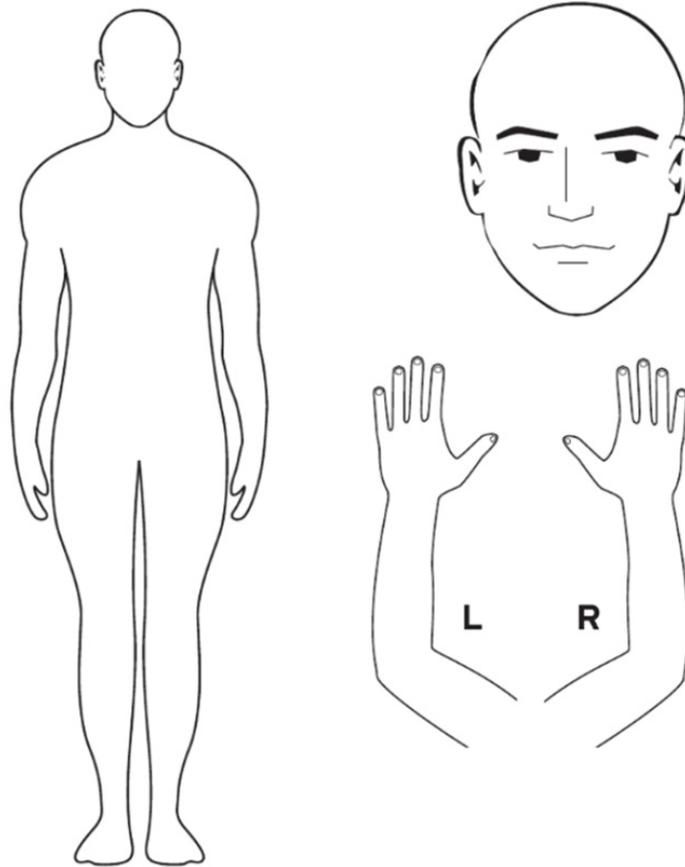
### Tips

- Treated areas must be completely protected from the sun. Apply sunscreen over the treated areas each morning and stay indoors during peak UV hours (10am – 4pm)
- When outdoors, wear a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeves and seek shade!
- Continue strict sun protection for several months after finishing treatment as the skin remains sensitive for some time
- See your GP for yearly skin checks or sooner if a treated spot reacts very strongly or doesn't react as expected.

**Your Treatment Plan:**

Apply Imiquimod cream morning / evening

Daily/every \_\_\_\_\_ days for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks to the below areas:



You may treat areas in serial sections (one area at a time) if advised.

**After finishing Imiquimod:**

Use: \_\_\_\_\_ once/twice daily for 2 weeks to settle inflammation.

**Repeat Treatment:**

Repeat course recommended: Yes / No

If yes, when: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

A large, empty light blue rectangular box intended for the patient to write their notes.

**Notes:**

**For questions or further information contact the Dermatology team:**

**Dermatology Department  
Townsville University Hospital  
Level One (Medical and Cardiac Clinics)**

**Monday to Friday 08:00-4:30pm**

**Admin Phone: (07) 4433 2862**

**Dermatology Nurse: (07) 4433 4718**