

# Imiquimod (Aldara)



**Superficial basal cell carcinoma:** a common reason for using imiquimod. Get more information at:  
[www.skintel.co.nz/treatments/aldara](http://www.skintel.co.nz/treatments/aldara)

Imiquimod (Aldara) is a cream that stimulates the immune system to kill abnormal cells. It is mainly used to treat superficial basal cell carcinomas (sBCCs). It can also be used as an alternative to Efudiv for actinic keratoses (AKs), however is less effective. It is sometimes used for warts and molluscum contagiosum.

When used for superficial BCCs, imiquimod is about 80% effective. It is about 50% effective for actinic keratoses.

It should only be used for **superficial lesions**. When used inappropriately on more significant skin cancers it can actually result in worse outcomes.

## Adverse Reactions

- **Flu-like symptoms:** Stimulation of the immune system causes some people to experience flu-like symptoms (generally feeling unwell, chills etc). If this occurs, these symptoms are normally mild.
- **Discomfort:** If the skin becomes very inflamed or sore, stop treatment for 2-3 days, then restart. The frequency of application can be reduced if required.
- **Light sensitivity:** Avoid using if you will be exposed to strong sunlight during the day. It is best to treat between May and September.
- **Incomplete treatment:** Repeat or alternative treatments may be required.
- **Scarring:** There is a small risk of scarring.
- **Allergy:** is very uncommon.
- Avoid use in pregnancy or while breast-feeding due to a lack of safety data for these situations.
- Avoid treating the eyelids.



**Please avoid strong sunlight  
when using imiquimod!**

## Treatment

Apply imiquimod once daily for five days a week - usually Monday to Friday. Treatment is normally continued for six weeks.

People that quickly develop an inflamed reaction and crusting may stop earlier than six weeks.

Imiquimod comes in sachets and should be applied with a cotton bud. The opened sachets can be stored in the fridge between applications.

### Expected Progress

- **Week 1:** Minimal reaction to mild redness
- **Weeks 3-6:** Red, inflammation, blistering and crusting, possibly uncomfortable
- **After treatment:** Gradual improvement and may remain slightly pink for up to 10 weeks.

## Notes

