ALDARA is the brand name for topical Imiquimod cream and works by stimulating the immune system. Aldara is used in the treatment of previously untreated, thin skin cancers such as superficial Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and Bowen’s disease. If used correctly a cure rate of 70% is achieved. This cure rate is less than other forms of treatment such as surgical excision and radiotherapy and about the same as photodynamic therapy (PDT). Aldara may also be used to treat pre-cancerous lesions called actinic keratoses and has the same cure rates as Efudix and PDT.

USEFUL POINTS CONCERNING ALDARA CREAM:
1. A course of cream (12 sachets or one pump pack) costs a standard prescription price for superficial BCC. A repeat prescription is commonly needed. Other problems are likely to cost you between $100-$200.
2. Aldara should not be used during pregnancy, breastfeeding or when the immune system is suppressed.

HOW TO USE THE CREAM:
1. Application is best in the evening, before bedtime. Wash and gently dry the affected skin and hands. You may apply the cream with the tip of your finger, but wash and dry your hands afterwards. The treated area should be washed and dried again in the morning.
2. For skin cancer, sparingly apply and rub in the cream to the visible tumour and to a 1 cm margin of skin around it. Use 5 days a week for 6 weeks i.e. apply the cream from Monday to Friday and not on the weekends.
3. For actinic keratoses, use the cream 3 times per week (Mon, Wed, Fri). Either use it for two cycles of 4-weeks separated by a 4-week treatment-free period OR continuously for up to 16 weeks. A maximum of 25 cm² (5 x 5 cm) can be treated at one time.
4. Do not apply near the eyes, nostrils and mouth or on sunburned skin. Avoid the sun during treatment.
5. One sachet can be used for 2-3 nights. Put plastic cling film over the opened edge and put it back in the fridge. Each pump pack needs to be primed before first use and contains 24 doses, if you have too much on your finger, do not “use it up” but discard it.
6. It is usual to develop an inflammatory reaction at the site of treatment with discomfort, redness, weeping and crusting. If the reaction doesn’t occur, then the treatment has probably not worked. Sometimes this reaction becomes quite severe – if so, please contact us to see whether the treatment should be discontinued. Usually, treatment can be restarted once the reaction has settled. Sometimes a severe reaction is due to infection and antibiotics will also need to be prescribed.
7. If you have not used Aldara previously, we usually like to review your progress 2-3 weeks into treatment to check the response and make sure that the treatment is working.

USUAL OUTCOMES & COMPLICATIONS:
Some people develop flu-like symptoms with nausea, fever, headache and muscle aches. Mild symptoms are common and can be treated with paracetamol but if severe, treatment will need to be stopped.
It is common to have an area of permanently paler skin following treatment. In people with olive or darker skin, hyperpigmentation or brown patches may occur. These will usually settle with time and sun protection is important during this period.
If severe local skin reactions occur, scarring can result.
If treatment fails, another form of treatment such as surgery will be necessary.

If you have any questions or problems during the course of your treatment please call: Adelaide Skin & Eye Centre 8211 0000 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)