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2. Imiquimod

Imiquimod topical

Generic name: imiquimod topical [*i-MI-kwi-mod-TOP-ik-al*]**Brand names:** [Aldara](#), [Zyclara](#), Zyclara Pump**Dosage form:** topical cream (2.5%; 3.75%; 5%)**Drug classes:** [Topical anti-infectives](#), [Topical antineoplastics](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on May 20, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is imiquimod topical?

Imiquimod topical (for the skin) is used to treat [actinic keratosis](#) (a condition caused by too much sun exposure) on the face and scalp.

Imiquimod topical also treats [genital warts](#) on the outside of the body, in adults and children at least 12 years old.

imiquimod topical is not a cure for genital warts.

Imiquimod topical is also used to treat a minor form of [skin cancer](#) called superficial [basal cell carcinoma](#), when surgery would not be an appropriate treatment.

Imiquimod topical may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Imiquimod topical side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction:** hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Wash off the medicine and call your doctor at once if you have a serious skin reaction such as severe [itching](#), burning, oozing, bleeding, or skin changes where the medicine was applied.

When treating genital warts around the vagina, if you have severe swelling or urination problems, stop using imiquimod topical and call your doctor right away.

Imiquimod topical may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:

- flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, nausea, tiredness, body aches, or swollen glands;
- bleeding or swelling where you applied this medicine; or
- **symptoms of herpes zoster (shingles)**--skin sores or blisters, itching, tingling, burning pain, rash on your face or torso.

Common side effects of imiquimod topical may include:

- minor skin pain, irritation, itching, redness, dryness, flaking, scabbing, crusting, scaling, or swelling where the medicine was applied;
- changes in the color of treated skin (may be permanent);
- [headache](#);
- tiredness; or
- nausea.

 [Imiquimod topical side effects](#) (more detail)

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Warnings

Follow all directions on your medicine label and package. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

Before taking this medicine

Do not use imiquimod topical for genital warts on a child younger than 12 years old. All other uses of this medication are for adults over 18 only.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- a weak immune system or autoimmune disorder;

- a [sunburn](#) or other skin problems; or
- [graft-versus-host disease](#).

If you are treating the genital or rectal area, avoid sexual activity while the medicine is on your skin. Imiquimod topical can weaken rubber condoms or diaphragms, which could break during sex and result in an unplanned pregnancy.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How should I use imiquimod topical?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Do not take by mouth. Topical medicine is for use only on the skin.

Using too much imiquimod topical or using it for too long can increase your risk of severe skin reactions. Do not use two different forms of imiquimod topical on the same treatment area.

Read and carefully follow any Instructions for Use provided with your medicine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand these instructions.

Wash your hands before and after applying imiquimod. Also wash the skin to be treated and allow it to dry for at least 10 minutes before applying the medicine.

Apply the cream in a thin layer and rub in completely. Use at bedtime and leave the medicine on for 8 hours. In the morning, wash the skin with water and a mild soap. **Do not cover treated skin with any type of plastic bandaging** (you may use cotton gauze). Wear only cotton underwear when treating genital warts.

How often and how long you use imiquimod topical will depend on the condition you are treating.

Actinic keratosis:

- **Aldara** is usually applied 2 times per week for 16 weeks.
- **Zyclara** is usually applied once daily for 2 weeks, followed by 2 weeks without treatment.

Genital warts:

- **Aldara** is usually applied 3 times per week for 16 weeks.
- **Zyclara** is usually applied once daily for up to 8 weeks.

Superficial basal cell carcinoma:

- **Aldara** is usually applied 5 times per week for 6 weeks. Apply the cream to the treatment area and surrounding skin, and rub in completely.

Use this medicine for the full prescribed length of time, even if your symptoms quickly improve.

Imiquimod topical is not a cure for genital warts. You may still spread this condition to others through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. You also may develop new lesions during treatment with imiquimod topical.

Call your doctor if the condition you are treating with imiquimod does not improve, or if it gets worse.

Your doctor may tell you to stop using imiquimod topical for several days if you have a skin reaction to this medicine. Even if you have skipped some of your doses, do not add time to the total number of weeks you use imiquimod topical (2 weeks for actinic [keratitis](#), 8 weeks for genital warts).

Your doctor will need to check your skin on a regular basis. If you have superficial basal cell [carcinoma](#), you may need a skin biopsy after you have completed your 5-week treatment with imiquimod topical.

Store at room temperature. Do not freeze. Store the **pump** in an upright position. Keep each **packet** unopened until you are ready to use it.

 [Detailed Imiquimod topical dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Skip the missed dose and use your next dose at the regular time. **Do not** use two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

Overdose symptoms may include severe skin irritation, feeling light-headed, or [fainting](#).

What should I avoid while using imiquimod topical?

Avoid swimming or taking a bath or shower while the medicine is on your skin.

Avoid using imiquimod on open wounds or on skin that has not yet healed from surgery or other medical treatment.

Avoid getting imiquimod topical in your eyes, nose, mouth, vagina, or rectum. **If contact does occur, rinse with water.**

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Imiquimod topical can make you sunburn more easily. Wear protective clothing and use [sunscreen](#) (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

Imiquimod will not protect against [sexually transmitted diseases](#), including genital warts, chlamydia, [gonorrhea](#), herpes, HIV, [syphilis](#), and [trichomoniasis](#). Talk with your doctor about safer sex practices.

Do not use imiquimod to treat any condition that has not been checked by your doctor. **Do not share this medicine with another person**, even if they have the same symptoms you have.

What other drugs will affect imiquimod topical?

Medicine used on the skin is not likely to be affected by other drugs you use. But many drugs can interact with each other. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#).

 [Imiquimod topical drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does imiquimod topical interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

imiquimod topical

+

Enter a drug name

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.


Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)


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DRUG STATUS

Availability
Rx Prescription only

Pregnancy & Lactation
 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*
N/A Not a controlled drug

Approval History
 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

6.9 / 10

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