PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Imiquimod

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Zyclara Pump; Zyclara [DSC]

## Brand Names: Canada

Aldara P; TARO-Imiquimod Pump; Vyloma; Zyclara

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat genital warts.
- It is used to treat perianal warts.
- It is used to treat skin harmed by the sun and some skin cancers.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor

about the allergy and what signs you had.

- If your skin has not healed from other treatment or surgery.
- If you are using another drug that has the same drug in it.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

**What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**
**For all uses of this drug:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your skin checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

### For genital or perianal warts:

- This drug will not cure your genital or perianal warts. You may get new warts while using this drug. Tell your doctor if you see any new warts.
- Condoms or diaphragms may not work to prevent pregnancy. Use some other kind of birth control while taking this drug.
- Avoid any sexual activity when this drug is on your genital or anal skin.

### For actinic keratosis:

- If you are breast-feeding, be sure this drug does not get into your baby's mouth or eyes. Do not put this drug on areas that may rub against your baby's face.

## What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

## For all uses of this drug:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Flu-like signs. These include headache, weakness, fever, shakes, aches, pains, and sweating.
- Bleeding.
- Swollen gland.
- People using this drug may get skin reactions where this drug is used or around the area. These reactions may include burning, crusting, dryness, flaking, itching, oozing, pain, redness, scabbing, scaling, sores or ulcers, or swelling. If these reactions get very bad, a break from using this drug may be needed as told by the doctor. Wash this drug off the affected area with mild soap and water, then talk with the doctor.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that bothers you or if the reaction makes it hard to keep putting this drug on. Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that causes problems with daily living.

### For genital or perianal warts:

- Vaginal pain or swelling.
- Trouble passing urine.

### What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Change in color of skin. This may not go back to normal.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Sinus pain.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1- 800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at

https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

## All products:

- Do not use more or for longer than you have been told. This may raise the chance of a very bad skin reaction or other side effect.
- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- Do not put in the vagina or anus.
- Use at bedtime.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Clean affected part before use. Make sure to dry well (at least 10 minutes) before putting on this drug.
- Put a thin layer on the affected skin and rub in gently.
- Do not put on sunburned skin.
- Do not put on cuts, scrapes, burns, rashes, or infected or damaged skin.
- Avoid putting on healthy skin unless you have been told to do so by the doctor.
- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings) unless told

to do so by the doctor.

- Do not bathe, shower, or swim after putting on.
- Leave on the skin for as long as the doctor told you to, then wash off.

### For genital or perianal warts:

- If you are an uncircumcised male with warts under the foreskin, pull back the foreskin and clean every day.

### For actinic keratosis:

- The number of lesions may get worse before it gets better. Keep using this drug as you have been told.
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if the skin areas look like they are healed.

### Packets:

- Throw away any part of the packet not used after use.

### Pump:

- Prime pump before first use.
- You will not need to prime the pump again while using this drug.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not put on 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?
## All products:

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## Pump:

- Store upright with the cap on.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information

leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health,

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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