

Medication Information Sheet

aldesleukin (all-dess-LOO-kin)

This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.

Other Name: Proleukin®

Appearance: Clear/colorless to slightly yellow solution mixed into larger bags of fluids

What is this medication for?

- For treating melanoma

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your doctor if you have/had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have / had lung disease, heart disease, immune system problems, psoriasis, underactive thyroid, kidney disease or liver disease, infection, transplant, psychiatric problems or seizures (or a history of seizures), chickenpox (or have recently been exposed to someone who has had chickenpox), shingles or have any allergies.
- Patients who have cancer are at a higher risk of developing blood clots. Some cancer drug treatments may increase this risk. Discuss this with your doctor.

How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

- Aldesleukin may harm the unborn baby. Do not use this drug if you are pregnant. If there is ANY chance that you or your partner may become pregnant, you and your partner together must: ► **Use 2 effective forms of birth control at the same time** while taking this drug: Keep using birth control until **6 months** after the last dose (general recommendation). Discuss with your healthcare team.
- Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant.
- Do not breastfeed while taking this drug.
- Effects on Fertility: Unknown

How is this medication given?

- This drug is given by injection into a vein.
- You will be given drug(s) before aldesleukin to prevent a reaction.

What else do I need to know while on this medication?

- This medication can interact with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements). Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- **For mild aches and pain or fever:**
 - If you feel unwell, take your temperature before taking any medications for pain or fever. They may hide a fever.
 - You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets. Ask your health care team about the right dose for you.
 - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA), including low dose aspirin for heart conditions, may increase your chance of bleeding. Talk to your health care team before you start or stop these medications.
 - **Talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room right away if you have a fever.** See the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.

What are the side effects of this medication?

- The following side effects have been seen in people using aldesleukin with other chemotherapy drugs, so some of these effects may also be related to chemotherapy.
- The following side effects are common or severe. You may not have all of the side effects. Other side effects may occur. If you have any unusual or bothersome symptoms, discuss with your doctor.

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
More Common Side Effects	
<p><i>Leakage of fluid from small blood vessels (may be severe), leading to low blood pressure (dizziness , fainting), fluid build-up in body (swelling, difficulty breathing)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May occur during or shortly after the drug is given 	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
More Common Side Effects	
<p>Diarrhea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May occur days to weeks after the drug is given / after treatment starts. • Drink plenty of clear fluids. Limit hot, spicy, fried foods, foods/drinks with caffeine, orange or prune juice. Try a low-fiber BRAT diet (Bananas, white Rice, Apple sauce, Toast made with white bread). • Take anti-diarrhea drug(s) if given to you by your doctor. • Also see Diarrhea pamphlet.* 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Nausea and vomiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May occur in hours to days after the dose is given/ after treatment starts. • Drink clear fluids and avoid large meals. Get fresh air and rest. • Limit spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. • Take anti-nausea drug(s) exactly as directed by your doctor. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it. • Contact your doctor if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting for more than 24 hours. • Also see Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet.* 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Cough, shortness of breath</p>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Rash; dry, itchy skin (may be severe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the sun; wear sunblock, a hat and cover exposed skin. • Use daily moisturizer. • <i>Severe rash may occur on the body/limbs with blistering or peeling of skin:</i> Get emergency medical help right away if this occurs. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Abnormal liver lab tests (may be severe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor will monitor these regularly. Call your doctor if you have yellowish skin or eyes, or unusual dark urine. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Unusual bleeding or bruising</p> <p>You may have black stools, cough up blood, blood in your urine, purple or red dots on your skin or bleeding that will not stop.</p> <p>Fever, chills, infection</p> <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

*The most updated version and more symptom control information can be found on: <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/druginfo>

Prepared with input from the Cancer Care Ontario-Medication Information Sheets Working Group.

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Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
More Common Side Effects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time OR • 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour. <p>While you are getting chemotherapy treatments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a digital thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills). • Avoid taking medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen) as they may hide a fever. • Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature. • Wash your hands often. • Check with your doctor before getting any vaccines, surgeries or visiting your dentist. <p>If you have a fever, talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room. See our Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count) pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p>Effects on the brain (confusion, dizziness, drowsiness; seizures in rare cases)</p>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Abnormal kidney lab tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may monitor your kidney function regularly. • Call your doctor or get emergency medical help if you have signs of kidney problems such as body swelling, passing little or no urine, or recent unusual weight gain. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Tiredness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest often; take naps if needed. Move slowly when getting up. • Eat well-balanced meals and drink plenty of fluids. Light exercise may help. • Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery when feeling tired. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
More Common Side Effects	
<p>Mouth sores</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good mouth hygiene. Regular teeth brushing with a soft toothbrush or Toothette®, and regular use of alcohol-free mouthwashes. • Instead, try a homemade mouthwash: Mix 1 teaspoonful of baking soda and 1 teaspoonful of salt in 4 cups (1L) of water. • Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy foods. • Check with your doctor or nurse as soon as you notice sores in mouth/lips or pain with swallowing. Your doctor may prescribe a prescription mouthwash to relieve mouth sores and prevent infection. • Also see Mouth Care pamphlet.* 	Contact your health care team as soon as possible
<p>Poor Appetite; don't feel like eating; weight loss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat foods that you like and try to eat regular small meals. • Use meal supplements if possible. See a dietitian. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p>Irregular heartbeat</p>	Get emergency medical help right away

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects, but may be Severe	
<p>Lung problems (increased cough, breathing problems, chest pain, coughing blood)</p>	Get emergency medical help right away
<p>Heart problems (irregular heartbeat, chest pain, fainting, swelling in legs/ankles/belly, shortness of breath)</p>	Get emergency medical help right away
<p>Bleeding/clotting disorder (may include bleeding from more than 1 site, bruising, signs of blood clots, kidney/liver/lung problems, fever, confusion)</p>	Get emergency medical help right away
<p>Blockage of an artery (blood vessel) in your heart, brain, chest, belly, or limbs; this may result in stroke (sudden loss of vision, speech, or the use of your limb(s)) or heart attack (chest pain, shortness of breath), or pain in chest, belly or limb</p>	Get emergency medical help right away
<p>Allergic reaction (fever, severe rash, itchiness, swollen face, lip or tongue, chest or throat tightness; may occur during or shortly after the drug is given)</p>	Get emergency medical help right away

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Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects, but may be Severe	
	away
Rupture in stomach or intestine wall (sudden, severe pain in belly or stomach area) Blocked intestines (severe belly pain, bloating, severe constipation)	Get emergency medical help right away
Tingling, numb fingers and toes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May slowly return to normal after treatment ends. • Contact your doctor or nurse if you have trouble doing up buttons, writing, picking up small objects, have pain or trouble with movement. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
Pancreas problems (increased pain in centre of belly and may extend to the back, appetite or weight loss)	Get emergency medical help right away
Rapid killing of cancer cells when you start treatment may lead to build up of cell waste products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If mild, this may cause gout, with joint pains, but if severe, may cause fevers, kidney failure, confusion and be life-threatening. • You MUST take the preventive medicines given by your doctor AND • Drink plenty of fluids (6-8 glasses per day) and void (urinate) frequently. 	Get emergency medical help right away
Inflammation of blood vessels in the skin (red or purple patches on the skin, rash/patches that do not turn white when pressed) or in the brain (rare)	Contact your health care team as soon as possible
Blood clot (limb pain or swelling, hardened vein in limb), may occur in lungs (sudden start of coughing, breathing problems, chest pain, coughing blood)	Get emergency medical help right away

For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms.

The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.

A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may

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not follow the information provided in the Formulary.