ALDARA CREAM: How to use this treatment

1) Aldara cream (Imiquimod) is a cream that helps your immune system to fight against several types of growths on your skin. It is used to treat warts, molluscum, sun damaged skin (actinic keratosis) and some skin cancers. Aldara causes local irritation and even ulceration when it works.

2) Aldara cream comes in little packets. Perforate the packet with a needle and squeeze just enough on to the fingertip or a Q-tip to apply thinly to the lesion and immediate surrounding areas. Only a small amount of cream is needed. You can save the rest of the medication in the packet with a Ziploc bag.

3) Your provider will indicate the specific frequency and duration of your treatment. Typically, apply Aldara cream to the lesion at bedtime 5 times per week (Monday through Friday) for 6 weeks, with weekends off. The goal of the treatment is to achieve the desired local redness and mild crusting. If there is minimal redness. Increase to 7 times a week (Monday through Sunday)

4) In the morning, wash the area with a gentle cleanser, such as Dove or Cetaphil. Apply a moisturizer with sunscreen and wear a hat for additional sun protection. For itching, or pain, consider ice cool compress and acetaminophen.

5) If there is too much redness or irritation, reduce accordingly. You can use as infrequently as twice a week (Monday through Wednesday) or three times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). The goal is to obtain tolerable amount of irritation, which is the evidence that your body is trying to fight the disease.
6) If a severe local reaction occurs, such as extensive crusting or blistering, stop the Aldara cream until the reaction resolves. This usually takes 3-4 days, then restart at a reduced frequency.

7) After you stop the medication, give the skin 3 to 4 weeks to heal from the treatment. At that time, if you think the skin disease is still present, set up an appointment for re-evaluation.

8) If you have problems or questions, stop the medication and contact the dermatology department.