

# Aldesleukin (Interleukin-2, IL-2, Proleukin)

Aldesleukin can alter the immune system. It is approved to treat renal cell cancer and melanoma. It is now being studied for use on other cancers and diseases.

## How Is It Given?

- clear liquid by IV (intravenous)
- by injection (subcutaneous)

## What Side Effects May Occur?

This is a partial list of the side effects you may have with this medicine. You may have some, all or none of those listed, or you may have other side effects not listed. Most side effects last only a short time.

### Common:

- flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, fatigue, weakness) that may occur 4 to 6 hours after therapy begins
- itching, rash, or peeling skin on the palms of your hands or soles of your feet
- skin irritation at the injection site — may occur 4 to 6 hours after a dose
- mouth sores
- mild nausea (feel like throwing up) and vomiting (throwing up)
- loss of appetite
- weight loss
- diarrhea (loose stools)

### Less common:

- dizziness
- confusion
- lethargy
- mood swings, difficulty concentrating
- depression

### High-dose therapy:

- fast or irregular heartbeat
- chest pain
- difficulty breathing
- decreased amount of urine
- weight gain, swollen face, hands or legs
- low blood pressure
- lowered white blood cell, red blood cell and platelet counts

## Special Notes

- You will likely have flu-like symptoms at the start of this treatment. Over time your body will get used to this medicine. Talk with your doctor or nurse for ways to help manage these side effects.
- If you will receive high doses, you will likely be admitted to the hospital for treatment. If you will receive lower doses, you may be treated in the clinic or receive injections at home.

- You or a family member may be able to give the shots at home. If you are going to do this, follow the instructions carefully.
- Some medicines interact with aldesleukin. Let your doctor know if you are taking any of the following:
  - high blood pressure medicine
  - cortisone-type medicines such as:
    - prednisone (Meticorten®)
    - dexamethasone (Decadron®)
  - opioids such as:
    - morphine or codeine
    - dimenhydrinate (Dramamine®)
    - prochlorperazine (Compazine®)
  - sedatives such as:
    - flurazepam (Dalmane®) or phenobarbital
  - tranquilizers such as:
    - diazepam (Valium®) or chlordiazepoxide (Librium®)
    - methotrexate
    - doxorubicin.

- You may have changes in your menstrual cycle or sperm count. Discuss birth control measures with your doctor. You should not get pregnant or father a child while taking this medicine.

## When To Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you have:

- fast or irregular heartbeat
- fast weight gain or fluid retention
- wheezing or trouble breathing
- chest pain
- bloody or black tarry bowel movements
- bloody vomit
- changes in your personality such as confusion, irritability or depression.
- sudden decrease in urine amount.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you want more complete medicine information or if you have questions.