



Chemotherapy: Aldesleukin (IL-2, Interleukin-2, Proleukin®)

Pronounced: "al-dess-LOO-kin"

How drug is given: By vein (IV)

Purpose: This drug is used to treat renal cell carcinoma, melanoma, and other diseases.

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

- If you have a rash, facial flushing (warmth or redness of the face), or itching during or after you get this drug, tell your cancer care team right away.
- Your blood pressure may drop, or your heart rate may slow down while you are getting this drug. This usually goes back to normal on its own. It is important to ask for assistance and take your time when you stand up during or after your treatment. You might feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, and headache, are common. If these occur, your cancer care team may suggest taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help control the symptoms. Please let your cancer care team know if acetaminophen is not effective, because other medications may be prescribed.
- Aldesleukin may cause you to feel sleepy, confused, or see unusual things (called hallucinations). If this happens, **tell your cancer care team right away.**
- Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

- You may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. Over time, fatigue could worsen, and you may feel physically weak or exhausted. This can be unrelated to activity. You may need to rest or take naps more often.
- Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within a few days after the drug is started. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. Be sure to also drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, tell your cancer care team.
- Your body may not be able to get rid of extra fluid. This is called edema. You may notice some swelling in your arms or legs.
- You may have a fast or unusual heartbeat. If you notice any changes in your heartbeat, tell your cancer care team right away.
- Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your cancer care team what lotions or creams you may use.

- Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This may happen 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. This includes a decrease in:
 - Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
 - White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
 - Platelets, which help clot the blood and stop bleeding

If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **call your cancer care team right away**.

- Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.
- Your kidneys could be hurt by this drug and not work as well. Your cancer care team will monitor your kidneys with blood tests.
- Rarely, some people's risk of heart problems may become higher, including having a heart attack, heart failure, or stroke. Call your cancer care team and go to the emergency room if you have chest pain, feel short of breath, have a racing heartbeat, notice changes in eyesight, get a very bad headache, or have major weakness.

Things that may occur after treatment ends (even months to years later)

Sexual health and fertility concerns

Women

- It is not safe to take this medicine during pregnancy. It could harm an unborn baby.
- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug

Men

- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex with a woman of child-bearing age, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.

The information in this document includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed here may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you are taking other medications. Please speak with your cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team. If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.