Aldesleukin (IL-2, Interleukin-2, Proleukin®)
("al dess LOO kin")

How this 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

1. 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.

2. You may have a drop in your blood pressure. Your blood pressure may be checked often.

3. 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.

4. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. You may be given medicine to help with this.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

1. You may feel very tired. This is also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can help you maintain your energy.
   
   In some cases, fatigue may be a sign of hypothyroidism. This is a condition in which your thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormone. If you feel fatigued and have symptoms such as cold intolerance or modest weight gain, tell your cancer care team.

2. Aldesleukin may cause you to feel sleepy, confused, or see unusual things (called hallucinations). If this happens, tell your doctor or nurse right away.

3. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within a few days after the drug is given. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your cancer care team.

4. A gradual weight gain is possible while you are on aldesleukin. This is often due to excess fluid build-up in the body. Your weight will be monitored frequently. Please notify your cancer care team if you develop any swelling in your hands or feet, or if you have shortness of breath.
5. You may have a fast or unusual heartbeat. If you notice any changes in your heartbeat, **tell your cancer care team right away**.

6. Some people’s risk of heart problems may become higher, including the risk of heart attack, heart failure, or changes in the heart’s rhythm. **Call your physician and go to the emergency room** if you have chest pain, feel short of breath, notice changes in eyesight, experience a very bad headache, or develop weakness.

7. Skin changes, such as redness, rash, or itching, may occur.

8. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. You will be given medicine to help with this.

9. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in your:
   - 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.

   This may happen 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **tell your doctor or nurse right away**.

10. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. It is important to keep your mouth clean. A soft-bristle toothbrush should be used for brushing your teeth. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Use a **baking soda mouth rinse** 4 or 5 times a day.

   **Mouth Rinse Recipe:**
   Mix: 1 tsp salt or baking soda with 8 oz. glass of water

   Other mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. Do not use mouth washes that have alcohol in them because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your cancer care team know. Check with them before having any dental work done.

11. Your liver may be affected by this drug. Labs may be drawn to monitor your liver function.

12. Your kidneys could be hurt by this drug and not work as well. Labs may be drawn to monitor your kidney function.

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

**Fertility and Related Precautions:**
- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Women should not breast-feed while receiving this drug.
- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.
The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects in this teaching sheet 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 take other medications. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.