

## USE OF IMIQUIMOD FOR SKIN PROBLEMS

Imiquimod is a very new type of treatment cream. It works by stimulating your own immune system in the skin where it is applied. This means that it makes your body's own defence mechanisms work harder to remove abnormal areas from the skin.

Imiquimod was first devised to treat genital warts, which are caused by a virus. This is therefore what the information leaflet in the packet will discuss. However, over the last few years, this cream has been used more and more for the treatment of sun damage and superficial skin cancers, often with great success. The action of the cream makes the body fight the cancerous cells.

### **How to use it**

The cream comes in sachets. A little cream should be applied locally to the area of skin that the doctor has discussed with you. Cut a corner off a sachet and apply the cream with a cotton-tipped bud. It may be possible to get several applications from each sachet. Keep the open sachet sealed with a blip in the fridge.

The cream should be used every day on week days and not at the weekend (i.e. 5 days per week). After a few applications the skin will become red and sore. It may be crusty and weeping. When this happens reduce the frequency of application to 2-3 times a week. If it is very sore and angry then you may have to leave treatment off completely for several days to allow it to settle. It is best to continue with intermittent treatments for a total of 4 weeks, unless advised otherwise. Try to adjust the number of applications so that the skin does look a bit angry and red, but not too sore and weepy. After 4 weeks, stop the treatment and allow the area to settle down.

You will be reviewed in the clinic to see if the treatment has worked well.