PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Infliximab

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it’s used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Avsola; Inflectra; Remicade; Renflexis; Zymfentra (1 Pen); Zymfentra (2 Pen); Zymfentra (2 Syringe)

Brand Names: Canada

Avsola; Inflectra; Remicade; Remsima SC; Renflexis

Warning

- This drug may raise the chance of infection, including severe infections. Sometimes severe infections have led to death. Most people who had these infections were taking other drugs to lower the immune system like methotrexate or steroid drugs. If you have any infection, are taking antibiotics now or in the recent past, or have had many infections, talk with your doctor.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started on this drug. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never got the infection. You will be tested to see if you have been exposed to TB before starting this drug.
- Lymphoma and other cancers have happened in people who take this drug or drugs like it. This has been deadly in some cases. Talk with the doctor.
- A rare type of cancer called hepatosplenic T-cell lymphoma (HSTCL) has happened with this drug and other drugs like it. These cases have been deadly. Almost all cases were in people who were using drugs like this one along with certain other drugs (azathioprine or 6-mercaptopurine). Most of the time, this happened during treatment for Crohn’s disease or ulcerative colitis. Also, most cases were in male teenagers or young males. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat Crohn’s disease.
- It is used to treat some types of arthritis.
- It is used to treat plaque psoriasis.
- It is used to treat ankylosing spondylitis.
- It is used to treat ulcerative colitis.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are allergic to mouse proteins, talk with the doctor.
- If you have heart failure (weak heart).
- If you have any of the following conditions: Blood vessel inflammation, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), multiple sclerosis, nerve problems, or seizures.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Abatacept, anakinra, or tocilizumab.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often.

Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.

- Make sure you are up to date with all your vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may raise the chance of an infection.
- Do not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while you use this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Have your skin checked. Tell your doctor if you have any skin changes like a new wart, skin sore or reddish bump that bleeds or does not heal, or a change in the color or size of a mole.
- If you have had hepatitis B before or carry the virus, this drug can cause the virus to become active. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems. You will be tested for hepatitis B before starting this drug. You will need to watch for signs of hepatitis while taking this drug and for several months after stopping it. Talk with your doctor.
- Liver problems have rarely happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Sometimes, allergic reactions have happened up to 12 days after getting this drug. Tell your doctor right away if you have a fever, rash, severe headache, sore throat, muscle or joint pain, swelling of the face or hands, or trouble swallowing.
- Abnormal heartbeats, heart attacks, high or low blood pressure, and strokes have happened during and within 24 hours after infusion with infliximab products. Sometimes, heart attacks have been deadly. Short-term loss of eyesight has also happened during and within 2 hours after the infusion. Tell your doctor right away if you have an abnormal heartbeat; chest pain or pressure; loss of eyesight; signs of high or low blood pressure like severe headache, dizziness, or passing out; or weakness on one side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, confusion, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred

eyesight.

- If you are 60 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.
- If you used this drug during pregnancy, tell your baby's doctor. You will need to discuss the safety and timing of certain vaccines with the doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of lupus like a rash on the cheeks or other body parts, sunburn easy, muscle or joint pain, chest pain or shortness of breath, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Pale skin.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Vaginal bleeding that is not normal.

- Pelvic pain.
- Vaginal discharge.
- Fast or slow heartbeat.
- Red scaly patches or bumps that are pus filled.
- Fever, chills, itching, hives, chest pain or pressure, or shortness of breath when drug is given. Other drugs may be given to avoid these.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.
- Rarely, people using drugs like this one have had nervous system problems. Sometimes, these problems have not gone away. Call your doctor right away if you have a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal; change in eyesight; dizziness; seizures; or weakness in your arms or legs.
- Heart failure has happened with this drug, as well as heart failure that has gotten worse in people who already have it. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Tell your doctor if you have heart disease. Call your doctor right away if you have shortness of breath, a big weight gain, a heartbeat that is not normal, or swelling in the arms or legs that is new or worse.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Headache.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Flushing.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Pain, redness, swelling, or other reaction where the injection was given.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.

Injection (I.V.):

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

Injection (subcutaneous):

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh or the belly area.
- This drug may be given into the outer area of the upper arm if given by someone else.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.
- This drug is colorless to pale brown. Do not use if the solution changes

color.

- Do not use this drug if it has been dropped or if it is broken.
- Do not remove the cap or cover until ready to use.
- Do not shake.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Inject at least 1.2 inches (3 cm) away from where the last dose was given.
- Do not give into skin within 2 inches (5 cm) of the belly button.
- Do not give into skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, scaly, hard, scarred, or has stretch marks.
- Each prefilled pen or syringe is for one use only.
- Throw away any part left over after the dose is given.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Injection (I.V.):

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

Zymfentra:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- After taking a missed dose, start a new schedule based on when the dose is taken. Talk with your doctor if you have questions about how to start a new schedule.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Remsima:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it and go back to your normal time.
- If it has been more than 7 days since the missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- If you are not sure what to do if you miss a dose, call your doctor.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Injection (I.V.):

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

Injection (subcutaneous):

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Store in the outer carton to protect from light.

Remsima:

- You may store unopened containers at room temperature. If you store at room temperature, throw away any part not used after 28 days.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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