PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ustekinumab

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Imuldosa; Otulfi; Pyzchiva; Selarsdi; Starjemza; Stelara; Steqeyma; Wezlana; Yesintek

Brand Names: Canada

Finlius; Jamteki; Otulfi; Pyzchiva; Stelara; Steqeyma; Wezlana; Yesintek

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat plaque psoriasis.
- It is used to treat psoriatic arthritis.
- It is used to treat Crohn's disease.
- 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 have had the BCG vaccine in the past year.
- If you have an infection.
- If you have TB (tuberculosis).

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.
- If you have a latex allergy, talk with your doctor. Some products have latex.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Drugs that may suppress the immune system like this drug may raise the risk of cancer. Patients will be watched for signs of cancer, especially those who are 60 or older, who have had light therapy, or who have been on drugs that suppress the immune system for a long time. If you have questions, talk with the 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.
- You may have more of a chance of getting an infection. Some infections have been severe or deadly. 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 while you take this drug and after you stop taking it. Vaccine use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well. Talk with your doctor.

- Do not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while you use this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- You will need a TB (tuberculosis) test before starting this drug.
- If your weight changes, talk with your doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or may become pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.
- If you used this drug when you were pregnant, tell your baby's doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- 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 a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Warm, red, or painful skin or sores on the body.
- Flushing.

- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Weight loss.
- Muscle aches.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- A very bad and sometimes deadly brain problem called posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) has happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have signs like feeling confused, lowered alertness, change in eyesight, loss of eyesight, seizures, or very bad headache.
- Pneumonia has happened during use of this drug. Sometimes this has been serious, and people have needed to go to the hospital. Tell your doctor if you have cough, fever, chest pain, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.

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:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Headache.
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Back, muscle, or joint pain.
- Irritation where the shot is 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.

Autoinjectors, prefilled syringes, or vials (subcutaneous injection):

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin in the upper arm, thigh, buttocks, or stomach area.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- You may need to leave this drug at room temperature for 30 minutes before using. Do not remove the cap or cover until ready to use. Do not heat this drug. If you are not sure if the brand you have needs to be left at room temperature before using, talk with your pharmacist or read the package insert.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Different brands of this drug may be clear or have a slight color. Be sure you know what your brand needs to look like when ready to use. Do not use if the solution changes color. If you are not sure, talk with the pharmacist.
- Do not give into a mole, scar, or skin that is irritated, tender, bruised, red, hard, or broken.
- Do not inject through clothes.
- Do not shake.
- Each autoinjector, prefilled syringe, or vial 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.

Stelara and Finlius prefilled syringes and subcutaneous vials:

- This product may contain small white particles. Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has large lumps, flakes, or other particles.

IV infusion:

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

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

Autoinjectors, prefilled syringes, or vials (subcutaneous injection):

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Do not use if it has been frozen.
- Store in the outer carton to protect from light.
- Protect from heat. Do not store in a vehicle's glove box or trunk.

Vials:

- Store upright with the cap on.

Wezlana autoinjectors, Wezlana subcutaneous vials, and Yesintek autoinjectors:

- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 30 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 30 days, throw this drug away.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Prefilled syringes (except Pyzchiva and Steqeyma):

- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 30 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 30 days, throw this drug away.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Pyzchiva prefilled syringes and autoinjectors:

- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 35 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 35 days, throw this drug away.
- You may put this drug back in the refrigerator 1 time only for no more than 60 days. You can do this either during the 35-day timeframe or at the end of the 35-day timeframe. Throw this drug away if it has been put back in the refrigerator for longer than 60 days.

Steqeyma prefilled syringes and vials (subcutaneous):

- If needed, you may store at room temperature for some time. Be sure you know how long this drug may be stored at room temperature. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within the time you are told, throw this drug away.

Steqeyma prefilled syringes:

- Some products may be put back in the refrigerator after being stored at room temperature. Some products must not be returned to the refrigerator after storage at room temperature. If you are not sure, talk with the pharmacist.

Steqeyma vials (subcutaneous):

- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Starjemza vials (subcutaneous):

- If needed, you may store the vial outside the original carton at room temperature for up to 8 hours. After drawing into a syringe, the syringe with attached needle can be stored at room temperature for up to 4 hours.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

IV infusion:

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

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.

Last Reviewed Date

2026-08-31

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

Ustekinumab - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center