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 your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has had the BCG vaccine in the past year.
- If your child has an infection.
- If your child has TB (tuberculosis).

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If your child has a latex allergy, talk with the doctor.

Some products have latex.

- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the 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 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 child's skin checked. Tell your child's doctor if your child has 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.
- Your child may have more chance of getting an infection. Some infections have been deadly. Have your child wash hands often. Have your child stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Make sure your child is up to date with all vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines while taking this drug and after your child stops 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 the doctor.

- Be sure your child does not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while using this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Your child will need a TB (tuberculosis) test before starting this drug.
- If your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, plans on getting pregnant, or may become pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.
- If your child used this drug while pregnant, tell the baby's doctor.
- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to the baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 severe and sometimes deadly brain problem called

posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) has happened with this drug. Call the doctor right away if your child has signs like feeling confused, lowered alertness, change in eyesight like loss of eyesight, seizures, or severe 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 child's doctor if your child has 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child 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 child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's 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 your child the shot, your child's 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 my child misses a dose?

- Call your child's 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 child's 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- 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.
- 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

2026-09-21

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

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center