MSK Kids

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 your child has any infection, is taking antibiotics now or in the recent past, or has had many infections, talk with your child's doctor.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started on infliximab. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never got the infection. The doctor may test to see if your child has 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 ulcerative colitis.
- It is used to treat some types of arthritis.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

Injection (subcutaneous):

- This form of this drug is not approved for use in children. However, your child's doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this form of this drug, ask your child's doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions about this drug.

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 is allergic to mouse proteins, talk with the doctor.
- If your child has heart failure (weak heart).
- If your child has any of the following conditions: Blood vessel inflammation, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), multiple sclerosis, nerve problems, or seizures.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Abatacept, anakinra, or tocilizumab.
- If your child is using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your child's doctor or pharmacist.

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.
- 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.
- Your child may have more chance of getting infections. Have your child wash hands often. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Make sure your child is up to date with all vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Be sure your child does not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while using this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may raise the chance of an infection.
- Have your child’s blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by 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.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child’s health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- If your child has had hepatitis B before or carries the virus, this drug can cause the virus to become active. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems. Your child will be tested for hepatitis B before starting this drug. You will need to watch for signs of hepatitis while your child takes this drug and for several months after your child stops it. Talk with your child’s doctor.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side

effects may be higher in children.

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

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.
- If your child used this drug during pregnancy, tell the 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 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.
- 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 child’s doctor right away if your child has a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.
- Sometimes, allergic reactions have happened up to 12 days after getting this drug. Tell the doctor right away if your child has 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 the doctor right away if your child has 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.
- Rarely, people using drugs like this one have had nervous system problems. Sometimes, these problems have not gone away. Call the doctor right away if your child has a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal; change in eyesight; dizziness; seizures; or weakness in the arms or legs.
- Liver problems have rarely happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your child’s doctor right away if your child has 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.
- 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 the doctor if your child has heart disease. Call the doctor right away if your child has 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 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:

- 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 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.

- 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?

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

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.
- 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child’s 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.

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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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