

Generic Name: Adalimumab



Brand Name: Humira

How it works:

- Humira is part of a group of medications called biologics, developed to treat inflammatory conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis, Psoriasis & Crohn's disease.
- Humira helps to block the increased action of the immune system process that leads to inflammation (swelling), joint & tissue damage. It specifically blocks activated TNF (tumour necrosis factor) that is seen in the joint fluid & blood of a person with inflammatory arthritis. TNF are proteins in the body that act as messengers between cells by the immune system.

Why take it?

- Humira has been ordered by the doctor to help manage your arthritis. Humira is used alone or in combination with other medications to help
 - reduce joint pain
 - decrease length of morning stiffness
 - reduce number of swollen & tender joints
 - increase your ability to move joints & do daily activities
 - slow or even prevent joint damage.

How quickly it works:

- Some improvement in your joints, ability to move & energy may be seen as early as 1 to 2 weeks after starting Humira, with the full benefit of the drug within 12 weeks.

How to take:



Humira is an injection that your doctor will order as a:

- preloaded syringe of 40 mg taken one day every 2 weeks or
- preloaded pen of 40 mg taken one day every 2 weeks

- The injection is self-administered into the fat tissue (subcutaneous tissue) of the abdomen, the upper, outer thigh or the back of the arm.
- A nurse will teach you how to give the injection. A booklet & a video is also available to assist with the learning of how to give the injection.

Develop a plan to take your injection:

- Associate your injection with a daily activity (i.e. take after your shower, etc) & keep a record of your injections
- **If you forget to take an injection**, take it as soon as you remember.

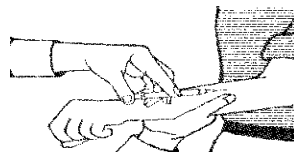


Monitoring:

Prior to starting Humira the following tests are recommended.



Blood tests



TB skin test



Chest x-ray

Lab tests

- Do blood tests: CBC (WBC, RBC, hemoglobin, platelets), AST, ALT (liver enzymes) and ESR every 4 to 8 weeks to monitor the effect of Humira.

Side Effects:

Possible side effects:

- Injection site reactions - redness, itchiness, swelling (20%)
- Upper respiratory infection (15.5%)
- Bronchitis (5.1%)
- Urinary tract infections (6.6%)
- Headache (13.8%)
- Rash (11.8%)



Potentially serious side effects:

- Serious infections (< 1%)
Pneumonia, inflammation of the kidney, wound infection, sepsis, cellulitis & diverticulitis
- Multiple sclerosis (rare)

Managing Side Effects:



- Cancer (rare)

Contact your doctor:

- if you develop any of the above symptoms. Side effects can occur anytime during treatment and are usually temporary.
- A temporary withdrawal of Humira, and an increase in frequency of blood testing may be required.

Allergic type reactions:

(itching, rash or injection site reactions that are bothersome)

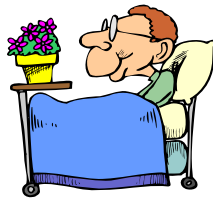
- take Benadryl 25 – 50 mg every 4 – 6 hours or Claritin 10 mg daily as needed
- use an anti-itch cream (Benadryl, Alveeno or Hydrocortisone .05%) of your choice.

Illness:

- Do not take the Humira if you suspect you have an infection or are being treated for an infection.



Surgery:



- Develop a plan with your rheumatologist about medications & herbal supplements when having upcoming surgery, dental work or other procedures.
- You may need to miss one dose of Humira prior to surgery.
- It is important that Humira is not restarted until at least 2 weeks after the surgery. The incision must be healed with no open wounds and no signs of infection.

Precautions:



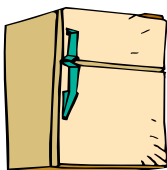
Pregnancy

- Do not take if you are pregnant or nursing.

Vaccines

- Do not take any live vaccines.
- May have flu or pneumovax vaccine

Storage:



- Refrigerate the medication at 2 - 8°C. Do not freeze.
- Carry Humira with an icepack when travelling.

Syringe disposal:

- Discard the syringe after each injection into a sharps container from your pharmacist.
- Check with the local pharmacy to see if they will discard used syringes.



General medication considerations:



1. **Take your medication as instructed by your physician.** Taking more medication than is recommended increases your risk of side effects. Skipping doses of medication will decrease the desired effect of the medication.
2. **Ensure you see your rheumatologist every 3 to 6 months after starting Humira.** These visits allow you & your doctor to assess how well your medications are working to manage your arthritis, any changes needed in your medications, and to apply for provincial coverage as needed.

3. Keep a diary.

As a reminder, record when you take your medications & any reasons for changes or withdrawal of medications.



4. Keep a medication list in your wallet.

Record all medications, vitamin/mineral or herbal supplements you are presently taking & any allergies you may have.

5. Carry a travel letter.

When travelling with injectable medication & needles, carry a letter from your doctor or clinic indicating the medication & dosage you are taking.



Humira Support Line:



Progress Program: 1 – 866 - 848 – 6472

- 24 hour telephone support line with access to nurses
- Register to obtain education materials, sharps containers, travel bag, telephone follow-up or injection teaching.

Clinic Contact:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Disclaimer:

This information does not replace medical advice. Specific questions about medications should be discussed with your doctor or pharmacist.