

Generic Name: Infliximab

Brand Name: Remicade



How it works:

- Remicade is a “biologic” medicine developed to treat the inflammatory process in the person with moderate to severe Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis, Psoriasis and Crohn’s disease.
- The immune system is the body’s defense against attack from foreign invaders such as bacteria and virus infections. In people with the above conditions, the body’s immune system mistakes certain normal cells in the body as foreign invaders. The immune cells get turned on and begin attacking healthy body tissues. This immune system process causes inflammation (swelling) of joints and tissues, and will cause damage if not treated.
- Remicade specifically blocks turned on (activated) TNF (tumour necrosis factor) immune cells that are seen in the joint fluid & blood of a person with inflammatory arthritis & psoriasis.

Why take it?

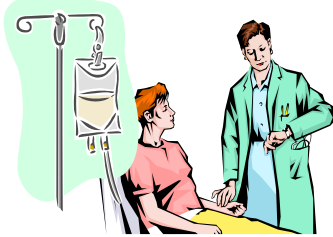


- Remicade has been ordered by the doctor to help manage your arthritis. Remicade is generally used after someone has tried a number of DMARDs. Remicade is used alone or in combination with other medications to help
 - reduce joint pain
 - decrease length of morning stiffness
 - reduce number of swollen & tender joints
 - decrease level of fatigue (tiredness)
 - increase your ability to move joints & do daily activities
 - slow or even prevent damage to your joints
 - decrease the redness & scaly patches on your skin if you have psoriasis.

How quickly it works:



How to take:



- Improvement in your joints & skin, your ability to move & energy level may be seen as early as 24 hours after starting Remicade, with a full benefit of the drug within 6 weeks.
- Remicade is effective for 6 to 12 weeks after each infusion.
- You will go to a clinic. A nurse will place a needle in a vein in your arm and you will receive an IV (intravenous) infusion over 2 hours.
- The preparation, infusion and observational period after the infusion may take as long as 3 ½ – 4 hours
- Remicade infusions are done at:
 - week 0 - initial infusion
 - week 2 – second infusion
 - week 6 – third infusion
 - then every 6 to 8 weeks to control inflammation (swelling) in the body.
- Dosage:
 - Each vial of Remicade contains 100 mg.
 - The number of vials you receive is based on your body weight starting at 3 to 5 mg/kg for your initial infusions.
 - The dosage or how often the infusions are given may be increased as needed to control inflammation (swelling) in the body.
- Methotrexate is taken with Remicade to increase the effect of the medicine, as well to decrease the risk of side effects.

Develop a plan for having your infusions:

- Mark your infusion dates on a calendar ahead of time
- Ensure you have transportation to the clinic
- Ensure the medication is ordered a week prior
- Wear comfortable clothing, bring a snack and a book.
- If you forget to go to your appointment or have any concerns before the infusion, contact the nurse.

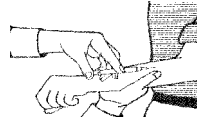


Monitoring:

- Prior to starting Remicade, the following tests are done:



Blood tests



TB Skin test



Chest xray



ECG

Lab tests



- Do blood tests (CBC, platelets, AST, ALT, albumin, creatinine, ESR/CRP) before each infusion.

Side Effects:

Like all medicines that effect the immune system, Remicade cause side effects, some of which may be serious.

Possible side effects:

- upper respiratory infection – colds
- sinusitis
- bronchitis
- urinary tract infection
- headache
- nausea
- diarrhea
- rash
- increased liver enzymes



Potentially serious side effects:

- **Infusion reactions** (19% of patients & 4.8% of infusions)
 - fever & chills (3%)
 - chest pain, hypotension, hypertension or dyspnea (1%)
 - itchiness, rash and/or cardiopulmonary symptoms (<1%)
- **Rare Serious infections**
 - pneumonia (1.8%), cellulitis (.5 %), and sepsis (.5%)
 - tuberculosis reactivation (rare)
- Development of antinuclear antibodies (ANA) (49%)
- Development of lupus like symptoms (.39%)
- New or recurrent cancer (.01%)

Managing Side Effects:



Contact your doctor:

- if you develop any of the above signs or symptoms. Side effects can occur any time during treatment and are usually temporary.
- If needed until symptoms go away, Remicade may be stopped and an increase in blood & other tests may be done.

Infusion reactions:

- If reactions occur, your symptoms will be treated immediately with medication as needed.
- It is important that certain medications (Benadryl/Claritin, Acetaminophen and sometimes Cortisone) be given prior to the start of the next infusion, during and following the infusion as needed.

Allergic type reactions:

(itching, rash, flushing or shortness of breath following infusions)

- Take Benadryl 25 – 50 mg every 4 to 6 hours as needed.
- Anti-itch creams (Benadryl, Alveeno or Hydrocortisone .05%) are also available.

Go to the emergency department if you have:

- shortness of breath
- chest tightness/pressure
- swelling of your lips, tongue or throat
- or any other serious concern



Illness:

Infections:

- There is an increased risk of serious infections associated with the use of Remicade. Any infections or fevers should be taken seriously & reviewed by your doctor.
- Do not have the Remicade infusion if you suspect you have an infection or are being treated for an infection.



Surgery:

Surgery, dental work or other procedures:

- Develop a plan with your doctor on upcoming procedures.
- Procedures should be done midway between infusions, & not within 14 days before or after receiving Remicade.



Precautions:



- Remicade is not restarted after the surgery until the incision is healed and there are no open wounds or signs of infection.

Remicade should not be taken if you :

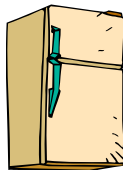
- have a previous history of a chronic infection or re-occurring infections
- have untreated tuberculosis (T.B.)
- have had a previous history of cancer or contact with T.B. until you are screened carefully by a specialist prior to starting treatment with Remicade.
- have moderate to severe congestive heart failure
- are pregnant or nursing.

Vaccines:

- No live vaccines should be taken while on Remicade
- Take flu & pneumovax vaccines midway between infusions, & preferably not within 14 days before or after receiving remicade.



Storage:



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

General medication considerations:



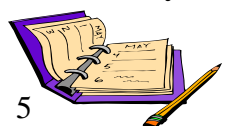
- 1. Take your medication as instructed by your physician.**
Taking more medication than is recommended increases your risk of side effects. Skipping doses of medication will decrease the desired effect of the medication.

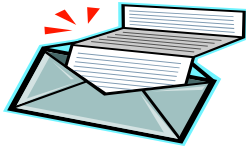
Once you are feeling better on Remicade, you must continue to take your other medications, unless instructed otherwise by your rheumatologist.

- 2. See your rheumatologist after starting Remicade every 3 to 6 months.** 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 reapply for provincial coverage as needed.

- 3. Keep a diary.**

Record when you take your medications, any side effect & any reasons for changes or withdrawal of medications.





**Remicade
Support Line:**



Clinic Contact:

Disclaimer:

4. Keep a medication list in your wallet.

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

Bring this list to all medical appointments with your doctor, nurse etc.

Remicare: 1 - 877 - 272 - 0784

- A service that helps you find a way to cover the cost of remicade.

Name _____ **Phone** _____

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

Developed: October 2002 Last Revised: January 2009
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