

Certolizumab pegol (Cimzia): Patient information sheet

Certolizumab (Cimzia) is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. It is part of a family of treatments called tumor necrosis factor inhibitors (TNFi).

How it works: TNFi medications stop the immune system's attack on the joints. They do this by blocking the action of tumor necrosis factor, which is involved in inflammation.

How it is given: Injection under the skin every other week

- Doses at weeks 0, 2, and 4 are 400mg – 2 pens, the loading doses
- Doses at weeks 6-24 are 200mg – 1 pen

What to expect and when: It usually takes 1-2 months before you notice a difference in your disease but you can feel better in a few weeks.

Common side effects: Headache, rash, sinusitis, upper respiratory infections, cough, sore throat, skin infections or local skin reactions

Possible serious side effects:

- Serious allergic reaction - Rare
- Immune suppression - Taking an anti- TNF slightly increases your risk of developing tuberculosis (TB), fungal infections, hepatitis B, and bacterial infections.
- Neurological symptoms - Multiple sclerosis can occur with anti-TNF medications (rare). Stopping the drug can stop the neurological symptoms.
- Cancer - Slight increase in lymphomas and other forms of cancer.
- Heart Failure - Beginning or worsening of heart failure (rare).
- Other - Lupus like symptoms; decrease in white blood cell count; abnormal liver tests (all rare).

Use Anti-TNF medications safely:

- Blood tests and liver function tests every 3-6 months.
- Keep your immunizations, flu vaccine and Tuberculosis screenings up to date.
- Avoid close contact with someone with an infection or tuberculosis

Call your doctor if you have:

- Temperature greater than 100.5, chills, or night sweats
- Continuing cough, increased sputum, colored sputum, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain
- Pain with urination
- A rash
- Numbness, tingling, or unsteadiness of hands or feet