

Certolizumab (Cimzia) – Patient Information

What does Certolizumab do?

Certolizumab is a TNF inhibitor, meaning it blocks a protein called Tumour Necrosis Factor (TNF) that drives inflammation.

It helps reduce:

- Joint pain
- Swelling
- Stiffness
- Long-term joint damage

NHS Grampian uses the brand **Cimzia**.

Can be taken:

- With other cDMARDs (e.g., methotrexate)
- On its own (monotherapy)

Licensed for use in adults with:

- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA)
- Axial Spondyloarthritis (AxSpA)

(Not used in anyone under 18 years.)

Delivery

Your injections will be delivered to your home by **Lloyds Pharmacy Clinical Homecare**.

- First delivery usually takes 3-4 weeks
- Calls may appear as unknown or withheld numbers
- Future deliveries are arranged to avoid gaps in treatment
- Lloyds nurses can visit your home to supervise your first injection
- Sharps bins are supplied and collected

Lloyds Contact: ☎ 0345 263 6135 ✉ lpch.customerserviceglasgow@nhs.net

Storage

- Store in the fridge (2–8°C)
- Do not freeze
- Keep in original packaging to protect from light
- Avoid storing at the back of the fridge (risk of freezing)
- Remove from fridge 30-45 minutes before injecting

Room-temperature option

Certolizumab can be kept out of the fridge for up to 10 days, provided it stays below 25°C.

Discard the injection if:

- It is not used within 10 days
- It becomes warmer than 25°C

How do you take Certolizumab?

Certolizumab is given as a subcutaneous (under the skin) injection.

Dosing schedule

- 400 mg (2 pens/syringes) at week 0, week 2, and week 4
- Then 200 mg (1 pen/syringe) every 2 weeks

Injection device

- Available as a pen or pre-filled syringe
- Single-use only
- You will receive training from a nurse
- Further instructions are included in the patient information leaflet in your medication box

Video demonstration on how to use the pre-filled pen: [Cimzia pen](#)

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate Certolizumab well, but side effects can occur in a small number of patients.

More information:

- **Arthritis UK** – www.arthritis-uk.org

- Patient information leaflet included with your medication

If you experience side effects requiring medical attention:

- Contact your GP or NHS 24 (111)
- Inform the rheumatology team, as your treatment may need review

Illness

If you develop an infection:

- Contact your GP to check if antibiotics are needed
- Stop Certolizumab while taking antibiotics
- Restart one week after finishing antibiotics, if you feel well

If you experience frequent infections, inform rheumatology.

COVID-19

Do not take Certolizumab until:

- 2 weeks after symptoms start, and
- You are feeling better

Operations

Stop Certolizumab:

- 2 weeks before surgery
- Restart 2 weeks after surgery, provided wounds are healing well and there is no infection

Some surgeons may request you wait until your postoperative review before restarting.

Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

According to BSR guidelines (2022):

- Certolizumab can be used while trying to conceive, during pregnancy, and during breastfeeding
- Babies exposed in pregnancy can follow the normal childhood vaccination schedule
- We recommend stopping Certolizumab 4 weeks before your due date, especially if a caesarean section is possible, to reduce infection risk

Men can continue Certolizumab when trying to father a child.

Vaccinations

Safe and recommended:

- Flu
- Pneumonia
- COVID-19 vaccines
- Shingrix (inactive shingles vaccine)

Avoid live vaccines:

- Zostavax (live shingles)
- Yellow Fever
- BCG
- MMR

Travel

If you will use the injections within 10 days, and they remain below 25°C, you do not need a cool bag. Keep them in original packaging to protect from light.

Otherwise:

- Use a cool bag with ice packs
- Do not let the injection touch the ice (wrap in bubble wrap)
- Bring extra resealable bags for long flights
- Always carry medication in hand luggage
- Request a travel letter from rheumatology well in advance