

Etanercept (Erelzi) – Patient Information

What does Etanercept do?

Etanercept blocks the activity of Tumour Necrosis Factor (TNF), a protein involved in inflammation. It is therefore known as a TNF inhibitor.

It helps reduce:

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

NHS Grampian uses the biosimilar brand **Erelzi**.

Can be taken:

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

Licensed for use in:

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

Erelzi can also be used in children and adolescents under 18, with dosing determined by age and condition.

Delivery

Your injections will be delivered to your home by Sciensus.

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

Sciensus Contact: 📞 0333 103 9499

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 minutes before injecting

Room-temperature option

Erelzi can be kept out of the fridge for up to 28 days, provided it stays below 25°C.

Discard the injection if:

- It is not used within 28 days
- It becomes warmer than 25°C

How do you take Etanercept?

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

Dosing schedule

- 50 mg once weekly, or
- 25 mg twice weekly (less common)

Injection device

- Available as a pen or pre-filled syringe
- Erelzi solution is clear and may contain small white or translucent particles — this is normal
- You will receive training from a nurse
- Sciensus can supervise your first injection at home

Video demonstration on how to inject with the pre-filled pen: [Erelzi pen](#)

Video demonstration on how to inject with the pre-filled syringe: [Erelzi syringe](#)

Further instructions are included in the patient information leaflet supplied with your medication.

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate Etanercept 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 Etanercept 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 Etanercept until:

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

Surgery/Operations

Stop Etanercept:

- 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):

- Etanercept can be used while trying to conceive, during pregnancy, and during breastfeeding
- If Etanercept is stopped by 32 weeks, a full-term infant can follow the normal vaccination schedule

- We recommend stopping Etanercept 4 weeks before your due date, especially if a caesarean section is possible, to reduce infection risk

Men can continue Etanercept 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 28 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