

Infliximab (Remsima) – Patient Information

What does Infliximab do?

Infliximab blocks 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 **Remsima**.

Should be used with:

- Methotrexate (recommended combination)

Licensed for use in:

- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA)
- Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)
- Axial Spondyloarthritis (AxSpA)

How do you take Infliximab?

By IV infusion (drip)

- Infliximab is commonly given by infusion in the rheumatology day unit.

Dosing schedule

- Week 0 (first infusion)
- Week 2
- Week 6
- Then every 8 weeks (Some patients may require more frequent infusions.)

Dose

- RA or JIA: 3 mg/kg in 250 ml saline over 1-2 hours
- PsA or AxSpA: 5 mg/kg in 250 ml saline over 1-2 hours

Monitoring after infusions

To ensure safety:

- After the first 3 infusions: remain in clinic for 2 hours
- Next 2-3 infusions: remain for 1 hour
- If no issues, you may go home immediately after future infusions

Dosing options

Infusion loading dose

- Two infusions (3 mg/kg) 2 weeks apart
- Then 120 mg injection 4 weeks later
- Then every 2 weeks

Injection loading dose by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection - *(For RA only)*

- Week 0 (first injection)
- Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4
- Then every 2 weeks

Injection device

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

Delivery (for injections)

Infliximab injections are delivered to your home by **Lloyds Pharmacy Clinical Homecare (LPCH)**.

- First delivery usually takes 3-4 weeks
- Future deliveries arranged to avoid gaps
- LPCH nurses can supervise your first injection at home
- Sharps bins are supplied and collected

LPCH 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 minutes before injecting

Room-temperature option

Infliximab injections can be stored:

- Up to 28 days
- Below 25°C
- In original packaging
- Protected from light

Discard if:

- Not used within 28 days
- Exposed to temperatures above 25°C

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate Infliximab 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 Infliximab injections while taking antibiotics

- Restart one week after finishing antibiotics, if you feel well
- Infusions will be delayed if you have an infection

If you experience frequent infections, inform rheumatology.

COVID-19

Do not take Infliximab until:

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

Surgery/Operations

For infusions:

- Plan surgery 6–8 weeks after your last infusion (depending on your schedule)

For injections:

- Stop 4 weeks before surgery
- Restart 2 weeks after surgery, if 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):

- Infliximab can be used while trying to conceive, during pregnancy, and during breastfeeding
- If stopped at 20 weeks, a full-term infant can follow the normal vaccination schedule
- If taken later in pregnancy, seek advice from the rheumatology team

Before due date

- Stop injections 4 weeks before your due date
- Last infusion should be 8 weeks before your due date This reduces infection risk if a caesarean section is needed.

Infliximab is safe for men 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

If receiving infusions:

- Ideally have vaccines mid-cycle, between infusions

Travel

Infliximab injections can be stored:

- Up to 28 days
- Below 25°C
- In original packaging
- Protected from light

If you prefer to keep them cool:

- 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