

Leflunomide

What is Leflunomide?

- Also known as a Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug (DMARDs)
- It helps reduce:
 - Joint pain
 - Swelling
 - Stiffness
 - Long-term joint damage

Your Leflunomide prescription:

- Your Leflunomide tablets will be prescribed by your GP
- Please take Leflunomide as prescribed, normally taken once daily
- Please allow 12 weeks for Leflunomide to take effect

Bloods and blood pressure monitoring:

- Blood pressure and bloods will be taken once every 2 weeks for 6 weeks, then once monthly for 3 months, then once every 3 months thereafter
- Your GP will be monitoring this
- However it is your responsibility to contact your GP to arrange these tests
- If there is anything abnormal with your blood results or blood pressure your GP will inform us or may want to recheck them again

Important Safety Information:

Avoid certain medications while on Leflunomide:

- Some blood thinners such as Warfarin and Acenocoumarol can interact badly with Leflunomide

- Other medication to avoid would be a cancer treatment called Paclitaxel

Side Effects:

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

- Side effects that can be common are gastrointestinal side effects such as nausea, diarrhoea, and generally feeling unwell (we would advise to persevere and hopefully as you get use to medication these symptoms will start to lessen however if not please contact us)
- If you notice any persistent side effects please contact the nurse advice line

More information:

- **Arthritis UK** – [Leflunomide](#)
- Patient information leaflet included with your medication

Infections/Antibiotics:

Withhold Leflunomide if you:

- Have any active infection
- Are taking antibiotics
- Resume methotrexate 2 weeks after you are free from infection and no longer on antibiotics.
- We also advise keeping up to date with regular vaccinations such as flu, COVID, pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

- **Women must use contraception** while taking leflunomide and should contact the rheumatology department before trying for a baby.

- You will usually be advised to stop leflunomide and have a “washout” treatment. This helps remove the drug from your body more quickly and safely before pregnancy.
- You should continue contraception until blood tests confirm the drug has fully left your system.
- If you choose not to have the washout treatment, you will need to use contraception for up to 2 years after stopping leflunomide.
- Men who choose not to have the washout treatment should use contraception for at least 3 months after stopping leflunomide.
- You should avoid taking leflunomide while breastfeeding, as the medicine may pass into breast milk.