

Sarilumab (Kevzara) – Patient Information

What does Sarilumab do?

Sarilumab blocks Interleukin-6 (IL-6), a protein involved in inflammation. It is therefore known as an IL-6 inhibitor.

It helps reduce:

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

NHS Grampian uses the brand **Kevzara**.

Licensed for use in:

- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

Sarilumab can be taken with methotrexate or other cDMARDs, or on its own (monotherapy).

Delivery

Your injections will be delivered to your home by **HealthNet 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
- HealthNet does not provide nurse supervision for the first injection
- Sharps bins are supplied and collected

HealthNet Contact: ☎ 011 3340 1790

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

Sarilumab can be stored:

- Up to 14 days
- Below 25°C
- In original packaging

Discard if:

- Not used within 14 days
- Exposed to temperatures above 25°C

How do you take Sarilumab?

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

Dosing schedule

- 200 mg every 2 weeks, or
- 150 mg every 2 weeks (depending on your consultant's recommendation)

Injection device

- Available as a pen or pre-filled syringe
- Single-use only
- You will receive training from a nurse

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

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate Sarilumab 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 Sarilumab while taking antibiotics
- Restart a couple of days after finishing antibiotics, if you feel well
- If you experience frequent infections, inform rheumatology.

COVID-19

Do not take Sarilumab until:

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

Surgery/Operations

Stop Sarilumab:

- 4 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):

- Sarilumab should be stopped once you become pregnant
- An alternative medication may be offered
- If no suitable alternatives exist and disease is severe, Sarilumab may be continued during pregnancy
- If used in the last 3 months of pregnancy, the baby should avoid live vaccines for 6 months (e.g., rotavirus, BCG)
- Limited safety data exists for breastfeeding

There is limited data on use in men trying to father a child; an alternative may be recommended.

Vaccinations

Safe and recommended:

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

Avoid live vaccines:

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

Travel

Sarilumab must be kept cool when travelling.

- 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
- Can be kept out of the fridge for up to 14 days below 25°C
- Discard if out longer than 14 days or exposed to higher temperatures
- Always carry medication in hand luggage
- Request a travel letter from rheumatology well in advance