

Tofacitinib (Xeljanz) – Patient Information

What does Tofacitinib do?

Tofacitinib reduces the activity of an enzyme called Janus Kinase (JAK), which plays a key role in inflammation. It is therefore known as a JAK inhibitor.

It helps reduce:

- Joint pain
- Swelling
- Stiffness
- Fatigue
- Long-term damage to bone and cartilage

These improvements can make daily activities easier and improve quality of life.

Licensed for use in:

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

How do you take Tofacitinib?

Tofacitinib is taken as a twice-daily tablet.

Dosing

- 5 mg twice daily

How to take it

- Swallow the tablet whole with water
- Take with or without food
- Do not split, crush, chew, or dissolve the tablet, as this affects how the medicine is absorbed

Delivery

Your tablets will be delivered to your home by **Alcura**.

- First delivery usually takes 3-4 weeks

- Calls may appear as unknown or withheld numbers
- Future deliveries are arranged to avoid gaps in treatment

Alcura Contact: ☎ **01604 433 510**

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate Tofacitinib well, but side effects can occur in a small number of patients. Some medicines cannot be taken alongside Tofacitinib.

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 Tofacitinib 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 Tofacitinib until:

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

Surgery/Operations

Stop Tofacitinib:

- 1 week 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:

- Tofacitinib should be stopped at least 4 weeks before trying to conceive
- Reliable contraception must be used during treatment and for 4 weeks after the last dose
- Tofacitinib cannot be used during breastfeeding
- There is limited evidence for use in men trying to father a child, so it is not recommended

Vaccinations

Safe and recommended:

- Flu
- Pneumonia
- COVID-19 vaccines
- Shingrix (inactive shingles vaccine; recommended for over-50s)

Avoid live vaccines:

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