

Etanercept, Enbrel®, Erelzi® – in the treatment of rheumatic diseases

Indications

Etanercept is used for treatment of indications such as rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis (Bechterew's disease), arthritic psoriasis and juvenile arthritis when sufficient treatment response is not achieved with traditional antirheumatic drugs or they cannot be used.

Drug product and mode of action

Etanercept belongs to a class of drugs called biologic drugs. Cytokines, which provide communication between cells, maintain the inflammatory reaction in rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory joint diseases. In terms of inflammation, the most important cytokines include TNF (Tumour Necrosis Factor). Etanercept is a TNF receptor analogue that neutralises the biological activity of TNF. It soothes joint inflammation, prevents it from progressing, and prevents joint damage.

Dosage and method of administration

Etanercept is given as a subcutaneous injection (under the skin) 50 mg once a week, using either a prefilled syringe or injector pen. The drug is also available in 25 mg prefilled syringe or packs of four bottles that contain 25 or 50 mg powder for injections.

Adverse effects

The most common adverse effect is local skin irritation at the injection site, such as redness, pain or itching. Other adverse effects that may occur include respiratory infections, rash, itching, headache, worsening of heart failure and changes in blood count. Etanercept may increase susceptibility to infections. Allergic reactions and severe infections are relatively rare, however. The use of the drug must be stopped for the duration of infections with fever or infections that require treatment with antibiotics. The risk of tuberculosis must be investigated before the onset of treatment.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Etanercept is withdrawn when pregnancy is diagnosed. Its use may be considered up to pregnancy week 32. During breastfeeding, the drug may be used after the first week of breastfeeding.

Treatment follow-up

Safety tests are taken **a month after onset of treatment, and then once every 3–6 months**. The results are checked at the health centre. The safety tests include the following: **Basic blood count, B-NEUT and ALT. CREA, U-ChemScr, CRP and ESR** are measured in connection with treatment assessment before doctor's appointment every 6–12 months.

Other considerations

Etanercept is stopped for at least a week before and after surgery. The operation is timed so that it takes place when the next dose would be taken. In the case of individual patients, the duration of the drug pause also depends on the nature and urgency of the operation, patient's overall infection risk, and risk of recurrence of the underlying illness. The use of the drug may be restarted once the wound has healed properly.

Vaccines that contain live attenuated organisms must not be given during treatment. Before the onset of treatment, any dental procedures required must be completed and vaccinations must be up to date.

Link [Reumalääkkeiden ohjeet | Reumatalo.fi | Terveyskylä.fi](#) (in Finnish)

[Wellbeing services county of Satakunta](#)