Satakunnan hyvinvointialue

Tofacitinib, Xeljanz® – in the treatment of rheumatic diseases

Indications

Tofacitinib is used for treatment of moderate to severe active rheumatoid arthritis and other long-term joint inflammations.

Drug product and mode of action

Tofacitinib belongs to the class of new small molecular mass antirheumatic drugs. It is a strong, selective JAK-family inhibitor. Tofacitinib acts by blocking the intercellular communication of inflammatory mediators, known as cytokines and alleviates the rheumatic inflammatory process in the joints and elsewhere in the body. It can be used alone or in combination with traditional antirheumatic drugs such as methotrexate.

Dosage and method of administration

Tofacitinib is available as 5 mg tablets. The recommended dose is one tablet twice a day. The tablet can be taken with meals or on an empty stomach.

Adverse effects

The most common adverse effects appearing at the onset of treatment include headache, upper respiratory infections, diarrhoea, nausea and increase in blood pressure. Tofacitinib may increase susceptibility to infections. Particularly, herpes family viruses may be reactivated. The use of the drug must be stopped for the duration of infections with fever or infections that require treatment with antibiotics. Tofacitinib may also cause elevation of liver enzymes and lipids and a decrease in haemoglobin and white blood cells.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Tofacitinib must not be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding. It is recommended that the use of the drug is stopped 4 weeks before a planned pregnancy.

Follow-up

Safety tests are taken 2–3, 6 and 12 weeks 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 and ALT. Lipids are measured before and 3 months after the onset of treatment.
CREA, U-ChemScr, CRP and ESR are measured before doctor's appointment in connection with treatment assessment every 6–12 months.

Other considerations

Tofacitinib is stopped at least a week before and two weeks after surgery. In the case of individual patients, the duration of the drug pause also depends on the type 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 should not be given during treatment. Before the onset of treatment, any dental procedures required must be completed and vaccinations must be up to date.
Tofacitinib is metabolised by CYP3A4 enzyme, which is why interactions are possible with drugs that block or stimulate CYP3A4.

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

Wellbeing services county of Satakunta