

Infliximab, INFLECTRA®, REMICADE®, REMSIMA®, ZESSLY® – in the treatment of rheumatic diseases

Indications

Infliximab 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

Infliximab 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). Infliximab is a TNF antibody that neutralises the biological activity of TNF. It soothes joint inflammation, prevents it from progressing, and prevents joint damage.

Dosage and method of administration

Infliximab is given as intravenous infusion (into a vein) as a single dose, 3-5 mg/kg. The treatment is repeated 2 and 6 weeks after the first dose. After this, treatment is usually given once every 8 weeks.

Adverse effects

During the administration of the drug, itching, headache, flulike symptoms and drop in blood pressure may occur. The symptoms are usually mild and disappear quickly. Other adverse effects that may occur include respiratory infections, skin rash, itching, headache, worsening of heart failure and changes in blood count. Allergic reactions are relatively rare. Infliximab may increase susceptibility to infections. 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

Infliximab is withdrawn when pregnancy is diagnosed. Its use may be considered up to pregnancy week 20. During breastfeeding, the drug may be used after the first week of breastfeeding.

Treatment follow-up

Safety tests are taken before the infusion and before doctor's appointment.

Other considerations

Infliximab is stopped before 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 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 about two weeks after the operation 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.

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

[Wellbeing services county of Satakunta](#)