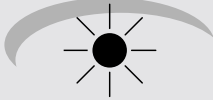
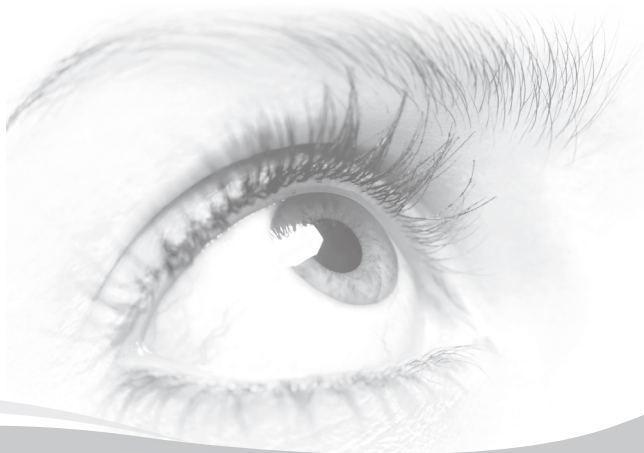


Scottish Uveitis Network



Information about ...

# Infliximab



Ophthalmology Service

**Scottish Uveitis National Managed Clinical Network**

## **What is infliximab?**

Infliximab is a drug used in the treatment of inflammatory conditions including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease. In certain inflammatory conditions, including uveitis, a protein called tumour necrosis factor (TNF) is produced. Too much TNF can cause your immune system to attack healthy tissues in your body and produce inflammation. The medicine infliximab blocks the action of TNF, reducing the inflammation.

- Clinical studies have shown that infliximab can also control inflammation within the eye.

## **When should you be careful taking infliximab?**

Be sure to tell your doctor if:

- You have episodes of infection.
- If you come into contact with someone who has chicken pox or shingles, you should contact your GP or the ophthalmology department for advice.
- You are on any other medication.

## **Can I have vaccinations while I am on infliximab?**

- You should not take live vaccines while on infliximab.
- Pneumovax and an annual flu vaccine are recommended while on this treatment.
- Please arrange to see your general practitioner each year to discuss this.

## **How should infliximab be taken?**

- Given by intravenous infusion into your arm.
- Given over 2 hours and you usually have to wait 1-2 hours after infusion, to ensure no side effects develop.
- Second infusion given 2 weeks later, then usually every 6-8 weeks.

## **Will I need blood tests?**

- You will require blood tests prior to every infusion.

## **What are the possible side effects?**

- May cause runny nose, headache, dizziness or flushing.
- Sometimes causes stomach pains or indigestion. May get hypersensitivity reaction 1-2 hours after infusion. May get chest pain, fever, low blood pressure, shortness of breath, rash.
- May be an increased risk of infection with this treatment. It is important to inform your doctor if you feel unwell.
- Those with previous tuberculosis or hepatitis are at risk of reactivation.
- Infliximab should be avoided in patients with multiple sclerosis as it may cause further relapses.
- May be an increased risk of skin cancer with infliximab. Therefore you should limit your exposure to sunlight by wearing appropriate protective clothing and using a sunscreen with a high protection factor.
- Lymphoma (cancer of the lymphoid tissues) has been reported but is very rare.

- Rarely may develop drug-induced lupus. Symptoms include rash, fever and joint pain.
- Generally treatment is tolerated well.
- Should you develop any side effects, please contact your GP or ophthalmologist for advice.

## **Can infliximab be used when pregnant or breast feeding?**

- You should not take infliximab if you are or think you may be pregnant, as it could harm an unborn baby.
- Reliable contraception should be used by women taking infliximab.
- Infliximab should be stopped at least 3 months before trying for a baby.
- Infliximab should not be taken when breast feeding.

## **How long will infliximab take to work?**

- Infliximab does not work immediately. It may take between 2-12 weeks before you notice any benefit.

## **May I drink alcohol while taking infliximab?**

- There is no known interaction between alcohol and infliximab.

**If you experience problems, contact your GP or XXXX Hospital:**

**Contact number:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Further information**

The Scottish Uveitis National Managed Clinical Network is a nationally supported network to improve and ensure an equality of care for patients with uveitis throughout Scotland.

**[www.sun.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sun.scot.nhs.uk)**

The Uveitis Information Group (Scotland) is a patient-led charity, based in Scotland, run by volunteers. They provide information, leaflets and fact sheets on uveitis which can be accessed via their site.

### **Uveitis Information Group**

South House, Sweening,  
Vidlein, Shetland Isles, ZE2 9QE  
Email: [info@uveitis.net](mailto:info@uveitis.net)  
Website: **[www.uveitis.net](http://www.uveitis.net)**

This leaflet has been produced by the Scottish Uveitis National Managed Clinical Network.

Approved by the Scottish Uveitis National Managed Clinical Network Steering Group. May 2012

Available on-line at: **[www.sun.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sun.scot.nhs.uk)**

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