

Children's Arthritis Treatment Information

Etanercept (Enbrel)

What is Etanercept?

Children and young people are given Etanercept (trade name Enbrel) to reduce the symptoms and help to slow down the progress of inflammatory conditions such as Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. In children and young people with Juvenile Arthritis a protein called TNF is present in the blood and joints in excessive amounts, where it increases inflammation. Anti-TNF drugs block the action of TNF and so can reduce inflammation. In this way they can help people with active juvenile arthritis. Etanercept is used when treatment with other medication such as methotrexate has not been helpful or has not been well tolerated.

When and how do I take Etanercept?

Etanercept has to be given by subcutaneous injection (an injection under the skin) twice a week. You or your parents can learn to give the injections. If this is not possible the injections can be given by the practice nurse.

How long will Etanercept take to work?

Etanercept can make you feel better in 2-12 weeks.

What are the possible side-effects?

Some of the reported side effects of Etanercept are:

- Infection - you may be more prone to picking up infection due to the effect of the drug on your white blood count (these cells help you to fight off infection) this will be checked regularly. If you develop an infection let your doctor or practitioner know and don't take the next dose of Etanercept
- Blocked/runny nose
- Headache/dizziness
- Abdominal pain/indigestion
- Rash
- Sore mouth/mouth ulcers
- Bruising/nose bleeds or bleeding gums - Etanercept can have an effect on the platelets in the blood (these help your blood to clot). Regular checks on your blood counts will pick this up
- Allergy - If you have symptoms of an allergy such as swelling, redness, soreness or pain around the injection site or if you feel unwell after taking Etanercept, check with your doctor or practitioner immediately before taking any more medication

Can I take other medicines along with Etanercept?

Etanercept may be prescribed along with other drugs, including methotrexate. You should discuss any new medications with your doctor before starting them, and you should always tell any other doctor treating you that you are taking Etanercept.

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Etanercept is not a painkiller. So if you are on painkillers you may continue to take these as well as Etanercept unless your doctor advises otherwise.

Vaccinations

You should not have any "live" vaccines such as oral polio, BCG and MMR.

You should keep away from anyone who has had the "live" polio vaccine for 4-6 weeks.

What do I need to know if I am going on holiday?

Make sure that you have enough medication to take with you. You can speak to your doctor/nurse if you need a prescription earlier than normal.

If vaccinations have been recommended you can check with your doctor/nurse if it is safe for you to have these.

If your holiday insurers need a letter to confirm your health details or medication you can discuss this with your doctor/nurse.

What do I do if I am in contact with someone who has Chickenpox or Shingles?

If you develop chickenpox or shingles, or you come into contact with someone who has chickenpox or shingles contact your doctor/nurse for advice.

Additional information

No one knows the risk of etanercept to an unborn baby so pregnancy must be avoided while on this medication.

TB (tuberculosis) is becoming more common. It is important that you let your doctor/nurse know if you are in contact with anyone who has TB.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

Rheumatology department Patient Information

For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

Poole

BH15 2JB

Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice