

**The Washington University Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinic
Medication Information Sheet for Infliximab (Remicade)**

Brand Names: Remicade

Generic Name: Infliximab

Drug Class: Tumor necrosis factor (alpha) blocker

What does this medication do?

Used for the treatment of moderately to severely active Crohn's disease by partially inhibiting (suppressing) the activity of the immune system. This medication works by blocking a substance called tumor necrosis factor, which is made by certain white blood cells in your body. Infliximab may decrease the inflammation caused by too much tumor necrosis factor. Infliximab may also be helpful in closing or reducing the number of draining fistulas.

Possible Side Effects:

Infliximab is an intravenous infusion that has been associated with hypersensitivity reactions (allergic reaction), infusion reactions, and/or an autoimmunity reaction (lupus-like syndrome). You may be more prone to developing infections while on this medication. If you develop lupus-like syndrome or have a severe hypersensitivity reaction, you will need to discontinue using Infliximab.

A hypersensitivity reaction may occur at various times in relation to when the treatment begins and can occur during the infusion, soon after the infusion, or even 3-12 days after the infusion. If hypersensitivity develops, you will be medicated before your infusions in an attempt to prevent it from recurring. Hypersensitivity reactions occur because part of the Infliximab drug is native to mouse proteins and your body may recognize this as a foreign substance. You may also already be on Imuran, 6-MP or methotrexate as part of your treatment and these drugs help prevent hypersensitivity reactions. You may also be given a single dose of an IV steroid, Benadryl and/or Tylenol to prevent this type of reaction. The steroid also helps to enhance the response you will get from the Infliximab.

Infusion reactions may also occur and will do so within 2 hours after the infusion. You may experience: fever, chills, itching/hives, chest tightness, difficulty breathing, and/or a change in blood pressure.

A lupus-like syndrome may also occur and have symptoms such as: chest discomfort or pain that does not go away, shortness of breath, joint pain, and/or a rash on the cheeks or arms that gets worse in the sun.

Please let your doctor know if you have:

- Congestive heart failure
- An active infection, fevers and/or night sweats
- Exposure to or previous infection with tuberculosis (TB) or a positive PPD (TB test)
- Multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre syndrome, any numbness or tingling or seizures
- Lung infection caused by a fungus (histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis)

Please call your doctor to discuss any of these side effects:

- Headache
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Cough

Call you doctor *immediately* if you have any of these side effects:

- Fever, chills, sore throat or other signs of infection
- Allergic reaction (itching or hives, swelling in face or hands, swelling or tingling in the mouth or throat, tightness in your chest, trouble breathing, difficulty swallowing)
- Muscle aches
- Joint aches
- Rash on cheeks or arms that gets worse in the sun

Warnings:

- You may get infections more easily while taking this medicine. Stay away from people with colds, flu, or other infections.
- Talk to your doctor before getting immunized with live virus vaccines (flu shot, measles)

Dosage and Administration:

You will receive this medication intravenously (IV) on week 0, week 2, week 4 and then every 8 weeks. Regular laboratory studies including at least complete blood count (CBC) and liver (hepatic) function panel will be required on this medication around the time of your infusions. For your convenience, you may just want to have labs drawn before or after each infusion.

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- Generally, you will be given 5 milligrams per kilogram of body weight (5mg/kg) at each infusion.
 - The actual infusion takes approximately two hours. Your total appointment time will be at least three hours.
 - Please call to reschedule your infusion if you are ill and/or running a fever
 - If you develop a hypersensitivity reaction, you will be pre-medicated with Benadryl, hydrocortisone and/or Tylenol.
 - Being on methotrexate, 6-MP or Imuran is protective against hypersensitivity reactions.
 - You will be tested for TB prior to receiving Infliximab using a Mantoux test (PPD) and yearly while on the medication. You may also be required to have a chest X-ray. If you have TB, you will need to be treated before starting Infliximab.