

Omalizumab for severe allergic asthma

Department of Respiratory
Information for Patients

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What is severe allergic asthma?

Asthma is a condition of the lungs which makes the airways narrow and inflamed.

Some people have severe allergic asthma. In allergic asthma the body releases Immuglobulin E (IgE) when you are exposed to things you are allergic to. IgE sticks to certain immune cells and causes them to release chemicals like histamine. These chemicals can lead to an increase in asthma symptoms.

Most people with asthma can control their symptoms with inhalers. A person with severe asthma may struggle to manage their symptoms even with high doses of medicines.

What are the benefits of having omalizumab?

Omalizumab is a biologic medicine. It works by attaching to IgE in the blood and blocking it from sticking to immune cells. This means fewer allergy-causing chemicals are released. This should reduce and control asthma symptoms and lower the number of asthma flare ups you have.

How often would I need to have omalizumab?

- The dose you get and how often you will need to take omalizumab is different for each person. It is based on your weight and total blood IgE levels.
- We inject omalizumab into the layer under your skin using a pre-filled syringe or pen.
- We will give you this injection every 2 weeks or every 4 weeks.
- We often start treatment in the clinic at the Glenfield Hospital. When your asthma is stable you may be able to give your injections at home.
- If omalizumab improves your asthma control, we may give you the treatment long term.

When will I start treatment?

The severe asthma team will see if this treatment is suitable for you. A severe asthma nurse will then contact you to book an appointment to begin treatment.

You must take this treatment at the right time. If you cannot get to an appointment please contact the severe asthma nurses as soon as you can. We will need to make you a new appointment. This may delay your treatment.

Will the treatment work for me?

We think this treatment will reduce your asthma flare ups.

A doctor will see you 16 weeks after you have started treatment. This is to see if it is working for you. If it is working well you will have it for another year.

Are there any side effects to omalizumab?

These are the common side effects of omalizumab (affecting up to 1 in 10 people):

- feeling dizzy,
- headaches,
- sore throat,
- sinus pain,
- joint pain,
- reaction at the injection site like redness, swelling, and pain,

It is rare, but people may have a severe allergic reaction after having their omalizumab injection.

Signs of this include:

- difficulty breathing,
- swelling,
- dizziness,
- feeling unwell.

You will need to stay in clinic for 1 hour after each of the first 3 injections. This is to make sure that you do not have any side effects.

If you think you are having an allergic reaction get medical help right away.

Should I continue with my other asthma medicines?

We use omalizumab with your other asthma medicines. You should continue to take all of your regular medicines including your inhalers. Once your asthma is better controlled, any changes to your medicines will be made by the severe asthma team. You will always need to continue taking a preventer inhaler.

How often will I be reviewed?

After the 16 week review, the respiratory consultant will see you every 12 months. If you, or the specialist nurse team, have any concerns about your asthma, you will be seen more often than this.

If your asthma is well controlled, the omalizumab will be continued for another 12 months. If you do not come to this appointment then we will not be able to continue prescribing omalizumab.

If your asthma is not controlled, we will look into why and make another treatment plan.

The contact details of the severe asthma team are on the last page. You can contact them directly if you have any concerns.

Can I have vaccinations?

You should continue to have your Flu and Covid vaccinations if offered. If you need any other vaccinations, like live vaccines, please contact the severe asthma service to check if it is safe to have them, using the link on the next page.

More information

Please contact the severe asthma specialist nurses on the number below if:

- you would like more information about omalizumab and your treatment options.
- you would like an appointment with the Consultant Pharmacist to talk about this medication in more detail.
- you are thinking of becoming pregnant, you are pregnant or are breast feeding.
- you cannot come to an appointment.

Useful links

The websites below have more information about your treatment:

Asthma + Lung UK website: www.asthmaandlung.org.uk

Omalizumab patient information leaflets:

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.101156.pdf

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.101154.pdf

Contact details

The severe asthma specialist nurses can be contacted on the link below or scan the QR code:

accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/rwesvas

Working hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm.



Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.

To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ دوسرے زبان ਵਿੱਚ چاہتے ہو، تو 'ਕਿਰਪਾ' ਕਰ کے 'ਹੇਠਾਂ' ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead

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