



## Concerning psoriasis treatment using biological drugs

Dosage forms: Pre-filled injection pen, pre-filled syringe, and infusion.

### What is a biological drug?

A biological drug is a protein that has been tailored to inhibit the activity of a chemical messenger inside the body. Some examples of these messengers are tumour necrosis factors (TNF), and interleukins (IL), specifically. Patients with inflammatory diseases such as psoriasis have high levels of these chemical messengers. Blocking these substances reduces inflammation and the symptoms of disease. Biological drugs are used to treat inflammatory conditions including psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases and rheumatoid arthritis.

There are a number of TNF inhibitors that use active substances such as adalimumab, etanercept, certolizumab, or infliximab. The first TNF inhibitor developed has been used to treat rheumatic diseases since 2000 and psoriasis since 2004. Drugs that block various interleukins such as IL-17 and IL-23 have become available in recent years.

### When is this treatment offered?

In cases of moderate to severe psoriasis where other systemic treatments (e.g. Neotigason and Methotrexate) are inadequate or unworkable. The effect will first be noticeable after 4–8 weeks of treatment. Continued improvement can be expected for around a further 3–6 months.

### Administration

The treatment is administered under the skin (subcutaneously) using a syringe or an injection pen. If you are going to use injections, please look at

[www.medicininstruktioner.se](http://www.medicininstruktioner.se) for information or ask one of our nurses for help.

These injections will be administered regularly at slightly different time intervals depending on which medication you have been prescribed.

When you have achieved a good effect from your treatment and the disease remains stable over a longer period of time (more than 6 months), it is possible to reduce the dosage of the medicine by taking your medicine a little less often. This is done in consultation with your doctor.

### Follow-up

When starting systemic treatment, the effect must be evaluated after 3–4 months - then a tangible improvement should be seen. Sometimes, however, it can take up to 6 months before the full effect is achieved. When the treatment goals have been achieved, follow-up normally takes place annually. Follow-up can be done via a questionnaire that we send out via 1177 (alternatively by letter). If you get worse and the treatment is not working well, we want you to contact us.



## **Preliminary testing prior to beginning biological drug therapy**

Before your treatment can begin, you will need to take blood tests and a lung x-ray.

## **Regular blood tests**

Your first blood tests will be taken after three months and then once a year after that. Certain biological drugs can sometimes be combined with Methotrexate.

## **Possible side effects**

Most people experience no problems with their treatment. The most common side effect is reactions at the injection site. Other possible side effects include an increased vulnerability to infections such as colds, bronchitis and skin infections. If you experience any adverse reactions or develop unfamiliar symptoms, please contact your clinic.

## **When you are ill**

If you develop a serious infection that causes fever or makes you feel unwell, you should temporarily discontinue your treatment. If you are unsure about what you should do, please contact your clinic.

## **Surgery**

You may need to pause your biological drug therapy in preparation for a scheduled operation. Whether or not this applies in your case depends on the type of operation, which other illnesses you have, and which therapies you are undergoing. The decision as to whether you need to halt your therapy must always be made by your surgeon. You can continue your therapy once your surgical wound has healed.

## **Pregnancy & breastfeeding**

Please see the information regarding the medication you have received.

## **Vaccinations**

It is recommended that the influenza vaccine be taken annually. However, live vaccines must not be taken while undergoing biological drug therapy. You are welcome to contact our dermatology clinic (Hudbehandling och dagsjukvård Sahlgrenska) should you need any advice about this.

**Important! Whenever you come into contact with healthcare practitioners, always inform them that you are undergoing biological drug therapy.**

## **Contact**

Hudbehandling och dagsjukvård Sahlgrenska (Telesvar answering service)

+46 (0)31-342 11 12

Sahlgrenska's switchboard (24 hrs.) +46 (0)31-342 10 00

You can also contact us via Healthcare Guide 1177's e-services at [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se) or at [www.sahlgrenska.se](http://www.sahlgrenska.se)

You can contact Healthcare Guide 1177 24 hours a day by calling 1177 or visit the website [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se)