



## **VEDOLIZUMAB**

### **WHAT IS VEDOLIZUMAB?**

Vedolizumab (brand name: Entyvio®) is a medication used to treat Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. It is an antibody that prevents inflammation causing white blood cells from entering and damaging the intestine. It targets the gastrointestinal (GI) tract rather than your whole body's immune system.

### **HOW IS VEDOLIZUMAB GIVEN?**

Vedolizumab is given into a vein as an infusion. A typical infusion takes 30 minutes. Before the infusions, you may get a dose of steroids, acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol®), and/or diphenhydramine (brand name: Benadryl®) to lower your chances of any reactions.

### **WHAT IS THE DOSE OF VEDOLIZUMAB?**

300 mg of vedolizumab is usually given at weeks 0, 2, and 6. After that, it is given every 8 weeks. Some patients may need to change their infusion schedule to every 4-6 weeks. Your provider will work with you to make adjustments as needed.

There is a formulation of vedolizumab that is a subcutaneous (under the skin) injection that is 108 mg given every 2 weeks after the initial IV infusions. The injectable version is FDA approved for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

### **WHEN CAN I EXPECT VEDOLIZUMAB TO WORK?**

Some patients may feel an improvement in symptoms as soon as 2-3 weeks of starting vedolizumab. Typically, up to 6-8 weeks for patients with ulcerative colitis and 10-14 weeks for patients with Crohn's disease is required to see a big benefit.

Vedolizumab works for most patients. The medication may stop working in up to 10% (1 in 10) of patients every year. To make sure that it keeps working, it is important to stay on track with your infusion schedule and do not miss any infusions.

In some cases, your doctor may also have you start a second immunosuppressive medication along with vedolizumab to help it work better and to remain effective longer. Studies have shown that early effective treatment for Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis is associated with long-term benefit including lowering the likelihood of needing surgery or hospitalization for health problems related to these conditions.

### **WHAT TESTS ARE NEEDED WHILE I AM ON VEDOLIZUMAB?**

Before beginning vedolizumab treatment, you will need blood tests to check for hepatitis B and tuberculosis infections. You may also need to test for tuberculosis every year. Blood counts and liver tests are done every 4 months while on vedolizumab. At times, your doctor may also check your vedolizumab level to make sure the dose is working well for you.





## **VEDOLIZUMAB**

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF VEDOLIZUMAB?**

All medications can cause side effects, but not everyone experiences them. Vedolizumab is considered safe and to have a very low rate of side effects.

Some side effects may occur at your infusion and others may not appear until sometime later. Although it is not common to have an infusion reaction, you will be monitored for infusion related reactions whilst you receive vedolizumab.

Fast heart rate, feeling light headed or dizzy. A skin rash, dyspepsia and nausea or shortness of breath.

Other things may occur for the few weeks after an infusion such as headache, joint pain, muscle aches.

Some patients develop symptoms of a common cold (if may well be a common cold) with a runny nose and sinus pain.

In many cases, the symptoms will go away, but in some cases they may be serious and require treatment. If the symptoms are severe or continue or bother you, please let your IBD team know. Vedolizumab can increase the risk of gastroenteritis. Seek medical attention if you develop chills, shivering, persistent cough or a high fever.

### **IS VEDOLIZUMAB SAFE DURING PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING?**

While little data exists, women and men on vedolizumab have not been associated with fertility problems, miscarriages, birth defects, preterm births, stillbirths, or other pregnancy-related problems. Most patients continue the treatment during their pregnancy. If you are pregnant while on vedolizumab, you may get your last dose of the medication early in the 3rd trimester of your pregnancy. Additionally, live virus vaccines such as the rotavirus vaccine are not recommended for your baby within the first 6 months of age. It is safe to breastfeed while on vedolizumab. This has not been shown to have any negative impacts on the baby.

It is important to discuss with your provider about continuing vedolizumab before, during, and after pregnancy.

### **HOW CAN I TAKE CARE OF MY HEALTH WHILE ON VEDOLIZUMAB?**

It is important to be up to date with your health maintenance while on vedolizumab. This includes being current on all the recommended vaccines such as the flu, COVID-19, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines. You should only get the recombinant shingles vaccine (brand name: Shingrix®). Do not get the older shingles vaccines that contain the live but weakened virus.

It is also important to be up to date in your general cancer screening including mammograms and pap smears for women, and skin check-ups for both men and women.

Speak to your GP about whether you are up-to-date on all your vaccines and cancer screening.

