



What is Remicade®?

Remicade® (generic name: Infliximab) is a prescription medication that is mainly used to treat patients with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is an *autoimmune disease*. An autoimmune disease is a condition that occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys healthy body tissue. Remicade® has also been approved for the treatment of other autoimmune diseases such as Crohn's Disease, ulcerative colitis, psoriatic arthritis, and ankylosing spondylitis.

How does Remicade® work?

Remicade® works with your immune system to put your disease into *remission* (a dormant state) and keep it there. Remicade® blocks a protein made by your immune system called tumor necrosis factor or TNF-alpha. People with certain diseases have too much TNF-Alpha, which confuses the immune system. This can cause it to attack normal healthy tissue and not just foreign substances. Too much TNF-Alpha causes inflammation, swelling and discomfort in the healthy tissue that gets attacked. Remicade® targets TNF-Alpha and blocks the damage caused by too much TNF-Alpha. This reduces inflammation and puts your autoimmune disease into remission.

What should I discuss with my doctor before using Remicade®?

- Tell your doctor about all of the medications you take. This includes prescription and non-prescription medications, aspirin, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Also tell your doctor if you have had any recent vaccinations.
- Tell your doctor if you have heart failure or if you are also taking Kineret (Anikinra). If you are taking Kineret you **cannot** take Remicade®.
- Tell your doctor about any known allergies to medication, especially allergies to *murine proteins* (proteins that are created from mouse proteins).
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breast feeding a baby. Remicade® has not been shown to be harmful to an unborn baby. If you are breast feeding, you should stop during Remicade® therapy.
- Tell your doctor if you have:
 - any signs of infection such as fever, sore throat, or *productive* cough (cough that brings up phlegm or mucous.)
 - any kind of known infection including minor infections like an open cut or sore, or a history of infection that keeps coming back
 - tuberculosis, have had tuberculosis, or have had close contact with someone who might have tuberculosis
 - hepatitis B



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- congestive heart failure (you **cannot** take Remicade®)
- epilepsy or another seizure disorder
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- cancer or a history of cancer
- psoriasis that has been treated with *phototherapy* (treatment with ultraviolet light or sunlight in combination with medication that makes your skin sensitive to light)
- a disease that affects your nervous system or your muscles (examples: multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, Guillain-Barre syndrome)
- any numbness or tingling
- liver problems including liver failure
- Gum or nose bleeds

How do I take Remicade®?

Remicade® is given by intravenous (IV) infusion. This means that it is given as an injection through a needle that is placed into your vein. Remicade® must be injected slowly over a period of at least 2 hours. The first three treatments are usually every 2 weeks. After that, treatment is repeated every 6 to 8 weeks depending upon the reason for treatment and your response to the medication. You will be asked to wait at the hospital for 30 minutes after the completion of your infusion so that the nurse can monitor you to make sure that you do not experience any reaction to your treatment (see side effects below.)

What happens if I miss a dose?

CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR if you miss a dose. It is important to receive Remicade® on the schedule determined by your doctor. If you have to miss an appointment for your Remicade®, contact your doctor to reschedule as soon as possible.

What should I avoid while taking Remicade®?

Avoid contact with people who have colds, the flu, or other contagious sicknesses. Remicade® can lower your blood cells that help your body to fight infection. This makes it easier for you to get sick from others or to bleed from an injury. Your blood cell counts will be tested on a regular basis to make sure they do not get too low.

Do not get “live” virus vaccines while you are taking Remicade®. Live virus vaccines include measles, mumps, German measles, polio, and chicken pox.



What are the possible side effects of Remicade®?

The most common side effects of Remicade® are:

- Respiratory infections (sinus infection, sore throat, flu-like symptoms)
- Coughing
- Stomach Pain
- Nausea
- Headache
- Fatigue (an extreme tired feeling)
- Anemia (reduced red blood cell count; symptoms include fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath)
- Fever
- Congestive Heart Failure (heart cannot pump enough blood to the body; symptoms include shortness of breath, swelling of the ankles or feet, sudden weight gain)

Tell your doctor about all side effects that you experience even if they seem very minor or if they go away. Make sure you tell your doctor about any new side effects that occur with continued treatment and side effects that do not go away.

Less common side effects include:

- Increased likelihood of Lymphoma (cancer of part of the immune system known as the lymphatic system). Symptoms include:
 - Swollen, painless lymph nodes in the neck, armpits or groin
 - Unexplained weight loss
 - Fever
 - Soaking night sweats
 - Coughing, trouble breathing or chest pain
 - Weakness and tiredness that don't go away
 - Pain, swelling or a feeling of fullness in the abdomen
- Liver injury occurs in rare cases. Symptoms include:
 - Jaundice (skin and eyes turning yellow)
 - Dark brown colored urine
 - Pain on the right side of your abdomen (stomach area)
 - Fever
 - Fatigue (an extreme tired feeling)



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- Nervous system disorders develop in rare cases. Symptoms include:
 - Changes in your vision
 - Weakness in your arms or legs
 - Numbness or tingling in any part of your body
 - Seizures
- Allergic hypersensitivity reactions develop in some patients who may be allergic to one of the ingredients in Remicade®. These reactions may occur during the infusion or shortly afterwards. Your doctor may have to stop, pause, or adjust your treatment if allergic reactions occur. You may be given medication to help treat or prevent allergic reactions. Symptoms include:
 - Hives (red, rash-like itchy bumps)
 - Chills
 - Fever
 - Chest pains
 - Difficulty breathing
 - High or low blood pressure

If you experience any of these symptoms during or after your treatment you should let your nurse know immediately.

***Remicade® can lower your ability to fight infections. If you are prone to, have a history of infections, or develop any signs of infection such as fever, fatigue (an extreme tired feeling), cough, or the flu while taking Remicade®, tell your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor if you develop any rashes after or between infusions.