

Anifrolumab-fnia (Saphnelo)

The FDA approved Anifrolumab in 2021 for the treatment of adult patients with moderate or severe **systemic lupus erythematosus**. Currently, Anifrolumab is not approved for treating lupus affecting the kidneys (nephritis) or lupus affecting the central nervous system. Anifrolumab may be used in combination with other drugs, such as hydroxychloroquine and glucocorticoids (steroids). It works by blocking molecules that can trigger the immune system to attack different parts of the body.

How to Take It

For adults with lupus, Anifrolumab is given as an infusion. Infusions are administered through a needle that is inserted in a vein by a healthcare professional. The infusions last for 30 minutes and have to be repeated every four weeks.

Anifrolumab has improved lupus affecting the skin and joints (arthritis). Anifrolumab does not require laboratory monitoring.

Side Effects

Anifrolumab can cause side effects, but most are mild, such as colds or bronchitis. Rarely it can cause serious respiratory infections or shingles. We do not know if anifrolumab is safe to use during pregnancy or breast feeding.

Tell Your Rheumatology Provider

Tell your rheumatology provider if you develop symptoms of an infection, such as a fever, cough, burning with urination, or shingles (red skin rash that causes pain and burning) or if you think you are experiencing any side effects or allergic reactions.

Consult with the rheumatology healthcare provider if you have become pregnant, are planning pregnancy, or are breastfeeding. The risk in pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been determined; you are planning to have surgery, as the drug may need to be held before surgery and if you plan to get any live vaccinations, including the nasal spray flu vaccine, some types of shingles vaccine, and others such as the measles, mumps, rubella, and yellow fever vaccines.

Written August 2022 by Alí Duarte-García, MD, and reviewed by the American College of Rheumatology Committee on Communications and Marketing.

This information is provided for general education only. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for professional medical advice, diagnosis and treatment of a medical or health condition.