



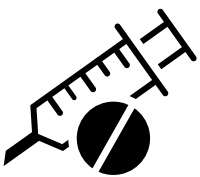
# PATIENT FACT SHEET

## Tocilizumab (Actemra)



### WHAT IS IT?

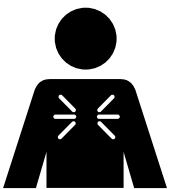
**Tocilizumab (Actemra) is a biologic medication approved to treat adults with moderately to severely active rheumatoid (RA), adults with giant cell arteritis (GCA), and people ages 2 and above with polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis (PJIA) or systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis (SJIA).** Tocilizumab blocks the inflammatory protein IL-6, which improves joint pain and swelling from arthritis and other symptoms caused by inflammation.



### HOW TO TAKE IT

**For adults with RA, tocilizumab can be given as an intravenous infusion (injected directly into the vein) every 4 weeks followed by an increased dose every 4 weeks;** for GCA, it is given once every week as a subcutaneous injection, an injection under the skin; for children with PJIA, it is given once every 4 weeks as an intravenous infusion; or once every 2-3 weeks as a subcutaneous injection depending on weight. For children with SJIA, it is given once every 2 weeks as an intravenous infusion. When used as an injection under the skin, the medicine can be injected into the thigh or abdomen. The site of injection should be rotated so

the same site is not used multiple times. Tocilizumab infusion or injection should not be given if an adult or child is active ill with an illness or high fever at the time the medication is due. Some patients will start to see improvement within a few weeks, but it may take several months to take full effect. Tocilizumab may be taken alone or with methotrexate or other non-biologic drugs. Tocilizumab should not be given in combination with other biologic drugs. Blood tests will be used to monitor for increases in cholesterol or liver enzymes and for reductions in blood cell counts while taking tocilizumab.



### SIDE EFFECTS

**Tocilizumab can lower the ability of your immune system to fight infections.** If you develop symptoms of an infection while using this medication, you should stop using it and contact your doctor. All patients should be tested for tuberculosis before starting on tocilizumab, although these types of infections have not been frequently seen. Allergic reactions to IV tocilizumab infusions can occur, which can include symptoms such as fever and chills, but these are rare. Tocilizumab has

been associated with increased cholesterol levels in some patients, and should be periodically monitored. If your cholesterol level becomes too high, it is possible you may need to start taking a medication to lower it. A rare complication seen with tocilizumab use in clinical trials was bowel perforation, or a hole in the bowel wall. If you have a history or diverticulitis or develop abdominal pain or bloody bowel movements while taking tocilizumab, you should notify your doctor immediately.



### TELL YOUR DOCTOR

**You should notify your doctor if you develop symptoms of an infection, such as a fever or cough, or if you think you are having any side effects, especially abdominal pain, bloody bowel movements, or allergic reactions.** If you become pregnant, are planning pregnancy, or if you are breastfeeding be sure to tell your doctor. Be sure to

talk to your doctor if you are planning on having surgery, or if you plan on getting any live vaccinations; these include the shingles vaccine, the nasal spray flu vaccine, and others such as the measles, mumps, rubella, and yellow fever vaccines.