

## Patient information

# Drugs for Inflammatory Bowel Disease Vedolizumab

## Digestive Diseases Care Group

### **Why have I been given Vedolizumab?**

Vedolizumab is a drug used to treat inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It may be used in patients with moderate to severely active ulcerative colitis. It is also an option for patients with moderate to severely active Crohn's disease who have already tried a type of treatment called a tumour necrosis factor (TNF)-alpha inhibitor.

### **What is Vedolizumab?**

Vedolizumab is a drug given into the veins. It reduces inflammation of the gut by blocking the passage of a type of white blood cell into the wall of the bowel.

### **How long will it take to work?**

It can take several weeks before you see a response to treatment. If your inflammatory bowel disease has not responded to Vedolizumab after 14 weeks then it should be stopped.

### **What are the benefits of taking Vedolizumab?**

Vedolizumab can be effective in controlling inflammatory bowel disease and preventing you from having recurrent flares of symptoms.

### **What are the common side effects?**

The most common side-effects (occurring in more than one in ten patients) include an inflammation of the lining of the nose and throat, a little like having a head cold. Other common side effects can be headache and painful joints.

Less common side effects include high blood pressure, pins and needles, rash, muscle weakness, back pain, indigestion and tiredness.

### **Are there alternative treatments available?**

If you develop side effects with Vedolizumab, or your disease is not well-controlled your specialist doctor will discuss other possible treatment options with you.

### **What will happen if I decide not to have treatment with Vedolizumab?**

Your symptoms will continue or worsen. Your doctor will discuss other options for treatment with you.

## **What dose should I take?**

At the start of treatment, you will receive three infusions of Vedolizumab in a six week period. After the first infusion, you will receive the second infusion of Vedolizumab two weeks later. You will receive Vedolizumab again after another four weeks. You will then receive Vedolizumab every eight weeks.

## **Do I continue other treatments for inflammatory bowel disease?**

Your specialist doctor will advise you whether you should change your other treatments for inflammatory bowel disease.

## **Do I need any special checks whilst on Vedolizumab?**

The activity of your inflammatory bowel disease will be monitored throughout the treatment, but you will not need special checks while receiving Vedolizumab.

## **Can I take other medicines along with Vedolizumab?**

Yes. Other medicines can be safely taken while you are receiving treatment with Vedolizumab.

## **Does Vedolizumab affect fertility and pregnancy? Can I breastfeed while taking Vedolizumab?**

There is not much information available about the use of Vedolizumab in pregnancy and breastfeeding in patients with inflammatory bowel disease.

If you are planning to get pregnant, or become pregnant, you should discuss your treatment with an IBD doctor. You can be referred to our specialist clinic at the Liverpool Women's Hospital to discuss things in more detail. In this clinic you will be seen by an expert in inflammatory bowel disease and an obstetrician (a doctor who specialises in the care of pregnant women). We will be able to discuss treatment options with you on an individual basis.

## **Can I drink alcohol on Vedolizumab?**

Yes, it is safe to drink alcohol while you are taking Vedolizumab, however large quantities of alcohol should be avoided.

## **Can I have vaccinations while on Vedolizumab?**

All vaccinations are safe on Vedolizumab. If required, 'Live' vaccines such as polio, BCG (Tuberculosis), MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), are best given before starting Vedolizumab treatment. However, if you have already started on Vedolizumab, and your doctor feels that you would benefit from receiving one of these vaccines, then you may receive the vaccine while continuing with your Vedolizumab treatment.

## **Where can I obtain further information about Vedolizumab?**

If you have any questions about Vedolizumab, ask your doctor, the IBD specialist nurse or your pharmacist.

This leaflet is not a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

## Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further Information

### Inflammatory Bowel Specialist Nurses

Tel: 0151 706 2659

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2659

Email: [IBDnurses@rlbuht.nhs.uk](mailto:IBDnurses@rlbuht.nhs.uk)

Website: [crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/mersey](http://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/mersey)

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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