

# Abatacept infusions for juvenile arthritis and uveitis

Information for  
Parents, Carers & Young People



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## Introduction

This leaflet contains information about the use of abatacept infusions in children and young people with juvenile arthritis.

### It tells you:

- how the medicine works
- how it should be given
- whether there are any side effects

Please also read the general information leaflets available at <http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk> or available at the hospital pharmacy. This is in addition to any information provided by the manufacturer in the medicine package.

## Why have I been given this leaflet?

The information in this leaflet will help you to remember what your doctor has told you about this medicine. It will also help you to decide whether you want to go ahead with this treatment.

Abatacept has a licence for use in children with polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis as an intravenous infusion for children 6 years and older, or subcutaneous from 2 years of age.

## What is abatacept and how does it work?

Abatacept is a fusion protein produced by DNA technology in chinese hamster ovary cells. The abatacept protein prevents the activation of T cells, which is associated with inflammation in the synovial fluid of joints.

## How should I give abatacept?

Abatacept will be given as an infusion into the vein. Subcutaneous abatacept is given weekly. Respose to abatacept will be assessed 6 months after starting dose treatment as it can take some time to have an effect.

## When should abatacept infusion not be used?

- You/Your child should not receive this medicine if they have a history of hypersensitivity to abatacept or they have tuberculosis or other severe infections.
- This medicine should be used with extra care if you/your child has a history of liver or kidney problems or disorders of the nervous system

Safe reliable contraception is very important when taking immunosuppressive medications. Some medications can cause abnormalities to an unborn child during pregnancy and can affect both the male sperm and the female eggs. Please discuss contraception or planning a pregnancy with your doctor or nurse. They can give you information on what risks the medication may cause to you and your baby.

If you think there is a possibility that you are pregnant or your partner may be pregnant please contact your nurse specialist or family doctor immediately.

## Are there any side effects?

Most medicines cause side effects. During or for a short time after the infusion, abatacept can sometimes cause raised temperature, low or raised blood pressure, itching with or without a rash and change in bowel habits.

Abatacept produces an effect on the immune system, therefore you/your child might get infections more easily e.g. chest infection. Contact your doctor, if you think that your child has developed an infection.

As with all immunosuppressant medication we would recommend safe sun exposure, and in particular avoiding sun burn, due to an increased risk of long term skin damage.

Everyone reacts differently to medicines. It is very unlikely that you/your child will have all the effects listed above.

## **Will abatacept affect any other medicines?**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist about all the other medicines you/your child takes. This includes any medicines prescribed by another doctor as well as medicines bought from a pharmacy or supermarket and any herbal remedies.

If you are/your child is prescribed a new medicine, or you want to buy a medicine for yourself/your child, it is important that you tell the doctor or pharmacist about all the medicines that you take, including abatacept. You should also tell your dentist next time you see him/her.

Caution may be required when you/your child requires a vaccine. Your doctor will be aware of this caution and consider each vaccine individually for you/your child.

Please arrange an influenza vaccine every winter, due to the immunosuppressive nature of the medicines. You may also need a pneumococcal vaccine.

## Why do I need to agree to take this medicine?

Your agreement should be obtained before prescribing any medicine for you/your child. You will have the chance to ask questions and then you will be asked to say whether or not you want to give this medicine to your child.

## If you have any further questions, please contact

<b>Children's Rheumatology Nursing Team</b>	<b>0113 392 0683</b>
<b>Paediatric Rheumatology Secretary</b>	<b>0113 392 0666</b>

## How can I find out more?

This leaflet has been written to provide general information about abatacept infusion in children. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak your doctor.





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