

Adalimumab: a quick guide

This is a summary of our information about adalimumab. Scan the QR code below for our full information about adalimumab. Or visit www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/treatments for information about other treatments for Crohn's and Colitis.

Adalimumab (pronounced **ad-a-lim-oo-mab**) is known by the brand names Amgevita, Humira, Hyrimoz, Idacio, Imraldi and Yuflyma.

You might also hear it called an anti-TNF medicine or a biologic.

Who is adalimumab for?

Adalimumab is used to treat Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis in adults and children from 6 years.

Your doctor or IBD team might offer you adalimumab if you are in a flare-up to try and get your symptoms under control. You may also take adalimumab to keep your Crohn's or Colitis under control (in remission).

How quickly does it work?

Everyone responds differently when taking a new medicine. You may begin to feel better soon after starting adalimumab. But it can take up to 12 weeks if you have Crohn's, or up to eight weeks if you have Colitis before you start to feel better.

How do I take adalimumab?

Adalimumab is given as an injection under your skin. It comes ready to use in a pre-filled syringe or a pre-filled injection pen. You will usually have the first dose in hospital or by a trained nurse at home. After that you will be shown how to inject adalimumab yourself at home. If you prefer a friend or family member can be shown how to give you the injection. Your hospital will organise for the injections to be delivered to your home.



How well does it work?

For many people, adalimumab works well to get their Crohn's or Colitis under control and keep it under control. But it does not work well for everyone. And for other people it may stop working after a while.

You may need to try several medicines before you find one that works for you.

Checks before starting adalimumab

Before you start treatment, your IBD team will check that adalimumab is right for you. They may ask you some questions and do some tests. These may include blood tests and X-rays. Tell your IBD team if you are pregnant, or you plan to get pregnant. They can help you make an informed decision about your care and your baby's safety.

Checks while taking adalimumab

You should have regular checks while taking adalimumab. This will include having blood tests.

Blood tests may be used to check the levels of adalimumab and antibodies in your blood. This helps your IBD team to see if adalimumab is working or if your dose needs changing. It is important that you attend these check-ups and have the blood tests.

Special precautions

Adalimumab affects the way your immune system works. You may be at a higher risk from infection than usual. Infections may affect you more than they used to. You will still be able to fight off infections, but not quite as well as other people. And it may take you longer to recover. But this should not stop you from living life as before. Find out how you can reduce the risk of infection by visiting www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/immunosuppressants.



You may be more at risk of skin reactions when taking adalimumab, and in rare cases, skin cancer. To reduce this risk take care in the sun:

- Stay in the shade
- Use sunblock or high factor sunscreen
- Cover your skin and wear a hat when you are out in the sun
- Do not use tanning equipment such as a sunbed or tanning booth

The [NHS website \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) has more tips for staying safe in the sun.

You may also be at slightly higher risk of some blood cancers. If you have previously had cancer, adalimumab may not be right for you.

Side effects

All medicines can have unwanted effects, although not everyone will get them.

Tell your IBD Team if you notice any side effects, or if you think you have an infection.

The most common side effects with adalimumab are:

- Itching, redness, swelling or pain where you had the injection
- Infections, such as a cold, tonsillitis, sinus infection or flu
- Headaches
- Skin rashes
- Muscle or joint pain
- Tummy pain or feeling sick (nausea)

This is not a full list of side effects. For more information see the Patient Information Leaflet provided with your medicine or visit medicines.org.uk/emc/

Taking other medicines

Adalimumab can interact with some other medicines. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking, or plan to take, any other medicines. This includes medicines that you buy yourself and any herbal, complementary or alternative remedies.



Vaccinations

If possible, make sure that you are up-to-date with all of your vaccinations before you start treatment with adalimumab.

You should not have live vaccines while taking adalimumab. Live vaccines contain weakened live strains of viruses or bacteria. They can cause infection in people with a weakened immune system.

Everyone with Crohn's or Colitis taking a biologic medicine, such as adalimumab, should be invited to have the flu vaccine every year. You should also be invited to have booster vaccines for COVID-19. You may be advised to have a pneumococcal vaccine and a shingles (Shingrix) vaccine. These are **not** live vaccines, and they are safe to have when you are taking adalimumab.

Your IBD nurse is

You can contact them on

Our Helpline is a confidential service providing information and support to anyone affected by Crohn's or Colitis. Call us on **0300 222 5700** or email helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.

We follow strict processes to make sure our information is based on up-to-date evidence and easy to understand. You can find out more at www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/information-production.

