

Rheumatoid Arthritis: Safety Considerations with Anti-TNF Therapy

<http://Rheuminfo.com>
your rheumatology resource

Persons with Rheumatoid Arthritis

What is Rheumatoid Arthritis?



Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a long-term disease that leads to inflammation of the joints and surrounding tissues. It can also affect other organs. If you feel you have signs of RA, be sure to talk to your doctor.

Higher risk of infection



RA results in higher risk of infection. A taxed immune system (caused by RA) can make it harder for you to fight off infections. Talk to your doctor.

DMARDs & Biologics

What is a DMARD?



A DMARD is a "Disease Modifying Antirheumatic Drug" and is one of our first line defenses in the treatment of RA. Patients with RA have overactive immune systems. DMARDs work broadly to calm down the immune system.

What is a Biologic?

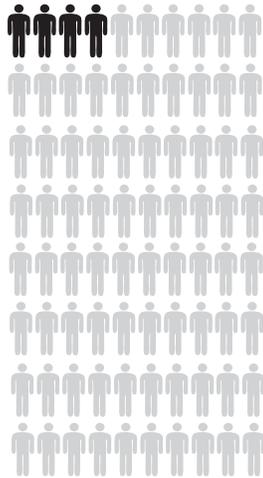


A Biologic is a modern form of therapy that is very effective in treating RA. Some parts of the immune system are important in causing the pain and swelling of RA. Biologics are designed to target these parts of the immune system.

Serious Infections & Important Facts

DMARD

If we follow 100 people with RA with or without a DMARD for a year, about 3-4 will end up with a serious infection.



Biologic (TNF inhibitor)

If we take these same 100 people, put them on a TNF inhibitor, and follow them for a year about 6 or 7 will end up with a serious infection.

However, after the first year the risk decreases to baseline. This means that those people who get infections do so in the first year.

Cancer



When followed for a year, 99% of patients with RA, regardless of their treatment, don't develop cancer. However, be sure to discuss this with your doctor if you have had cancer in the past.

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you:



Develop a fever



Think you have an infection



Are given antibiotics to treat infection



Please call your doctor if you have any concerns.