

How to use this medication

What is it



Some people with arthritis have special immune cells called T-cells that “turn on” and attack the joints. Abatacept is a biologic medicine that stops T-cells from “turning on” and helps the pain and swelling of arthritis.

Given by injection



Abatacept is given by injection once a week. The normal dose is 125 mg every week. Talk to your doctor.

Take it once a week



Abatacept is taken only once a week. You, a friend, or a family member can be taught how to give the injections.

Give it some time



Although some patients can feel better quite quickly in others it can take a little longer. Keep taking your medication.

What you need to do

Don't take if you have an infection



Abatacept can make it harder for you to fight off infections. Call your doctor if:

1. You develop a fever
2. You think you have an infection
3. You are given antibiotics to treat an infection

Make sure to get tuberculosis testing



All patients should have a tuberculosis skin test & chest x-ray before starting abatacept. Talk to your doctor.

Get occasional blood tests



It is important to have occasional blood tests to keep track of your arthritis.

Side effects & important facts

Injection site reaction



Abatacept can rarely cause a reaction (redness, pain, & itching) at the injection site. Tell your doctor if these are severe.

Surgery



Abatacept should be stopped before surgery. It can be restarted once things have healed and there is no sign of infection. If you are having surgery, talk to your doctor about when to stop the medicine.

Pregnancy & breastfeeding



Abatacept has not been studied in pregnancy. Let your doctor know if you are planning to get pregnant or if you are breastfeeding.

Emphysema / COPD



Abatacept can worsen symptoms of emphysema (COPD) and make pneumonia worse. Tell your doctor if you have emphysema or COPD.

Cancer



Abatacept has very rarely been associated with developing cancer. Tell your doctor if you have had cancer in the past.

When should I call my doctor

Please call if you need to stop



- If you feel sick and want to stop
- If you are concerned about any side effects
- If you want to or have already stopped the medicine

Other reasons to call your doctor:



Fever or think you have an infection



If you are having surgery



If you become pregnant



If you plan to get any vaccinations



If you develop a rash