

# Certolizumab

[Sir-toe-LIZ-you-mab]  
Cimzia®

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

## How to use this medication

### What is it



Some people with arthritis have too much TNF. TNF is a protein found in the body that can cause pain and swelling in the joints. Certolizumab is a biologic medicine that blocks TNF and helps the pain and swelling of arthritis.

### Given by injection



Certolizumab is given by injection once every 2 weeks. The normal dose is 400 mg every 2 weeks for the first 3 doses then 200 mg every 2 weeks.

### Take it once every two (2) weeks



Certolizumab is taken only once every two (2) weeks. In some cases it may be given once a month. 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

### Stop if you have an infection



Certolizumab can make it harder for you to fight off infections. Stop taking certolizumab and 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 certolizumab. Talk to your doctor.

### Get occasional blood tests



It is important to occasionally have your blood tested while taking certolizumab. This is important to keep track of your arthritis and to make sure your blood counts are ok.

## Side effects & important facts

### Injection site reaction



Certolizumab can rarely cause a reaction (redness, pain, & itching) at the injection site.

### Surgery



Certolizumab 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.

### Heart problems



Certolizumab may make a condition called congestive heart failure (CHF) worse. Tell your doctor if you have CHF.

### Pregnancy & breastfeeding



Certolizumab can be used safely in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Let your doctor know if you are planning to get pregnant or if you are breastfeeding.

### Other very rare side effects



Patients have very rarely developed conditions of the nervous system (multiple sclerosis) and the immune system (lupus) while taking medications like certolizumab.

### Cancer



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

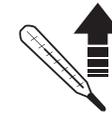
## When should I call my doctor

### 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

## Other important information

### Stopping certolizumab



You can simply stop taking certolizumab. You do not need to wean off it.