

Sarilumab

[Sar-ILL-you-mab]
Kevzara®

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

How to use this medication

What is it



Some people with arthritis have too much IL-6. IL-6 is a protein found in the body that can cause pain and swelling in the joints. Sarilumab is a biologic medicine that blocks IL-6 and helps the pain and swelling of arthritis.

Given by injection



Sarilumab is given by an injection once every 2 weeks depending on your body weight. The normal dose for each injection is 150 - 200 mg. Talk to your doctor.

Take it every 2 weeks



Sarilumab is taken every 2 weeks. You, a friend, or a family member can be taught how to give the injection.

Give it some time



Although some patients can feel better quite quickly after receiving the medication, in others it can take a little longer.

What you need to do

Get regular blood tests



Have your blood tested regularly (your doctor will tell you how often). This is important to make sure sarilumab isn't affecting your liver, blood counts, or cholesterol levels.

Don't get pregnant or breastfeed



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

Don't take if you have an infection



Sarilumab 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

Get tested for tuberculosis



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

Side effects & important facts

Injection site reaction



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

Bowel injury



Sarilumab has rarely been associated with an injury to the bowel (holes in the wall of the bowel). Let your doctor know if you develop stomach pain during your treatment with sarilumab.

Cancer



Very rare cases of cancer have been seen in patients receiving sarilumab. It is not known if sarilumab causes cancer. Tell your doctor if you have had cancer in the past.

Other very rare side effects



Patients have rarely had allergic reactions to sarilumab.

Surgery



Sarilumab 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 sarilumab.

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

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