

## ETANERCEPT ‘ENBREL’

**What is Enbrel?** Enbrel is a fusion protein medication administered by subcutaneous injection. It works by blocking the activity of TNF $\alpha$ , a molecule crucial to the immune response and inflammation. Enbrel is FDA approved for the treatment of severe plaque psoriasis. Overall, Enbrel is an effective treatment for severe psoriasis, but there are many potential side effects.

**What are the potential side effects of Enbrel?** For a thorough discussion of potential side effects and adverse events, please refer to the package insert or the Enbrel website: <http://www.enbrel.com>.

**The following are the major side effects of Enbrel:**

**Serious infections and sepsis, including death:** Since Enbrel suppresses the immune system, there is an increased risk of systemic infections, including but not limited to tuberculosis, pneumonia, upper respiratory viral infections, and infections in the blood which can lead to death. Reactivation of hepatitis B has also been reported.

Enbrel should not be used for patients with HIV, diabetes, and any other conditions that predispose the patient to infection.

**Cancers:** There are case reports of patients developing lymphoma, leukemia, and skin cancers when using Enbrel.

**Central nerve system diseases:** Some reports have linked Enbrel to the development of multiple sclerosis. It is preferable to avoid Enbrel if one has history of nerve diseases or family history of nerve diseases. Some patients present with headache, mental status changes, permanent disability, seizure disorder, transverse myelitis, and optic neuritis.

**Lupus:** Reports have linked Enbrel to increased autoantibody titer and development of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), an autoimmune disease.

**Congestive heart failure:** Progression and development of congestive heart failure were linked to Enbrel use. Most patients will experience an improvement or disappearance of the CHF after therapy is stopped, and although rare, this may lead to death.

**Bone marrow suppression:** There have been rare reports of anemia, pancytopenia, and even death associated with Enbrel.

**Injection site reactions:** This is a common side effect with Enbrel. This is NOT dangerous and tends to resolve over time.

Enbrel belongs to a new class of medication. It is possible that with time, more side effects will be uncovered. The risks and benefits of Enbrel need to be weighed on an individual basis before deciding to take this medication.

### **Instructions for Enbrel Use**

- 1) Your next visit will be with a nurse for a PPD (tuberculosis test). This is a small “shot” just under the surface of the skin to see if you may have latent (hidden) tuberculosis in your lungs.
- 2) At that visit, you will also be given an appointment for a return visit in 48 hours, with a nurse. Please bring a small cooler with ice or ice packs to this next visit. Your prescription for Enbrel will be sent to the Pharmacy.
- 3) In 48 hours, if you have no reaction (redness, swelling) on the forearm where the PPD was administered, you should pick up your Enbrel prescription from the East Pharmacy on your way in to Dermatology to have your PPD read. Place the Enbrel into your cooler with ice. After some education, you will give yourself this medication under the nurse’s supervision.
- 4) Take the Enbrel with you to the Dermatology visit for your PPD reading. If the nurse verifies that the PPD is negative, you will be taught how to give yourself the injections (using the medication you picked up earlier from the pharmacy). The nurse will be there to guide you through every step, as shown in the Enbrel booklet.

### **Instructions for disposal of medicine sharps**

- 1) Used medical sharps (lancets, syringes, needles, scalpels, etc.) should be placed in a proper sharp disposal container.
- 2) Sharps disposal containers can be purchased through the Kaiser OTC Pharmacy or any local drug store. Check on line for other disposal systems: [www.sharpinc.com/](http://www.sharpinc.com/), [www.medadyne.com/](http://www.medadyne.com/) and [www.earth-shield.com](http://www.earth-shield.com)
- 3) When filled, sharps containers should be closed tightly and taken to:
  - The Household Toxics Facility at the Sonoma County Central Disposal Site located at 500 Meham Road. Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 7:30AM to 3:30PM (no fee for So. Co. residents; bring proof of residency)
  - Community Toxics Collection held Tuesdays in Sonoma County (see SBC yellow pages for locations). Or to make an appointment, call (877) 747-1870 M-F from 1-4PM.
  - Home pick up by the Toxics Rover is also available for a \$35 fee. For an appointment call (877) 747-1870 (limited free service available to homebound seniors and the disabled.)
  - Small personal sharps containers can be bought at Dollar Drug (located in the G&G shopping center)
- 4) Additional information on waste disposal can be obtained from the Sonoma County Eco desk at 565-Desk (3375) from 12-3PM or via the internet at [www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)
- 5) Refer to the SBC yellow pages for other recycling and waste disposal information.