



LUPUS MEDICINES

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES: BELIMUMAB (BENLYSTA)

Questions answered:

What kind of medicines are monoclonal antibodies?

How does belimumab work?

What are the benefits of taking belimumab for a person with lupus?

How long does belimumab take to work?

How do you take belimumab?

What are the side effects of belimumab?

How do you take belimumab safely?

When should you call your doctor?

What kind of medicines are monoclonal antibodies?

- Antibodies are a special type of protein produced by our immune system that prevent infection. Monoclonal antibodies are antibodies that are all identical copies of one cell.

How does belimumab work?

- Belimumab (brand name Belynta) works by blocking the actions of a molecule called B cell activating factor, or BAFF.
- Belimumab (brand name Belynta) works by blocking the actions of a molecule in our immune system that has been shown to cause more symptoms of lupus

What are the benefits of taking belimumab for a person with lupus?

- Belimumab is the first drug developed specifically to treat lupus that was approved by the FDA.
- By reducing the number of autoantibodies (antibodies that attack the body), the drug has been shown to reduce the symptoms of lupus and frequency of flares.

How do you take belimumab?

- Belimumab is most often taken as an infusion. Typically, a patient will have the first three infusions every two weeks and then every 4 weeks after that.
- It can also be self-administered as an injection.

What are the side effects of belimumab?

- The most commonly reported side effects are nausea, diarrhea, fever, inflammation of the nose and throat, bronchitis, insomnia, pain in extremity, depression, and migraine.

How do you use belimumab safely?

- Do not take if you are pregnant, breast feeding, or planning a pregnancy
- Avoid live vaccines starting 30 days before starting belimumab and while you are on the medicine

When should you call your doctor?

- Temperature greater than 100.5, chills, or night sweats.
- Continued cough, increased sputum, colored sputum, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, chest tightness, wheezing.
- Bruising or bleeding without an obvious reason
- Started any new medicine

<https://resources.lupus.org/entry/what-you-need-to-know-about-benlysta>

<https://www.benlysta.com/about/how-to-use.html>

Be sure to talk to your rheumatologist if you have any other questions or concerns.



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