



Rituximab

Information For Patient With Glomerulonephritis

Generic Name	Brand Name
Rituximab (ri-TUX-i-mab)	Rituxan®

What is Rituximab and why is it being recommended for me?

- Rituximab is used to control diseases of the immune system such as glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys) or vasculitis (inflammation of the blood vessels).
- Rituximab works by lowering your immune system.
- Specifically, it works by reducing the number of B-cells (white blood cells) in your body.
- It can reduce the leakage of protein from your kidneys into the urine.

How is Rituximab taken?

- Rituximab is given as an intravenous (IV) infusion by a nurse.
- You will have to go to a hospital day unit or a private infusion clinic for administration of Rituximab.
- Your first appointment to receive Rituximab will last about 6–8 hours.

What else do I need to know before starting Rituximab?

- To prevent a specific, serious lung infection called pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia (PJP), you will be prescribed an antibiotic. Most people will need to take this antibiotic for at least 6 months after the last Rituximab infusion.
- Always contact the clinic before starting any new prescription and/or nonprescription medications (including vitamins and herbal products).
- Avoid pregnancy and breastfeeding with Rituximab. Although Rituximab is sometimes used in pregnant women, the long term effects on an unborn child are currently unknown.
- Speak to your doctor about birth control options before receiving Rituximab.
- Ensure that your vaccinations are all up to date before receiving Rituximab.
- Contact the clinic before receiving any vaccines. Rituximab may increase your chance of an infection and/or make the vaccine not work as well.

What monitoring will I need?

- The clinic will order regular blood tests and 24 hour urine collections to check your response to Rituximab and to monitor for side effects.
- During your follow-up visits, you may also have a blood test done called the “CD 19/20 cell count”. This test may need to be done at a specific laboratory. It will help monitor your immune system function.

What are the possible side effects of Rituximab?

- All medications may cause side effects; however, many people only experience mild side effects or none at all. Contact the clinic if you have any concerns about the following possible side effects:

Side effects and what to do

	Side Effects
Most Common (20-50% of people experience)	Infusion related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever, chills Skin rash, itching Flushing Nausea, vomiting Headache Blood pressure change Medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) may be given before your Rituximab infusion to limit the possible infusion related side effects. You will be carefully monitored during the Rituximab infusion. If you experience any of these symptoms, the Rituximab infusion may be slowed down or stopped.
	Increased risk of infection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rituximab lowers your body's ability to fight infection. Avoid close contact with people who have an infection, a cold or the flu. Wash your hands with soap often and/or use hand sanitizer. Report any signs and symptoms of infection (such as fever, chills, bad sore throat, pain with urinating, etc.) to your doctor immediately.
Less Common (less than 10% of people experience)	Lower blood cell counts (red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clinic will monitor your blood cell counts.
Rare (less than 1% of people experience)	Allergic reaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensation of face, tongue, throat swelling Difficulty breathing You will be carefully monitored during the Rituximab infusion. If you experience any of these symptoms the Rituximab infusion will be stopped and treatment will be provided.
	Unusual infections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia (PJP) Reactivation of tuberculosis (TB) Reactivation of viral hepatitis Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML): This is a brain infection that can cause inflammation and/or damage to the brain The clinic will monitor for signs of unusual infection.
	Cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rituximab may increase your risk of cancer. This risk is present with most medications that decrease your immune system. Avoid sunlamps and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protect you from the sun.

Questions? Contact the Clinic at: _____

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