

Guselkumab - Medication Information

What is guselkumab?

Guselkumab (brand name: Tremyfa®) is a medication used to treat ulcerative colitis. It is a type of medication that is categorized as a monoclonal antibody, and it works by blocking chemicals in the body that cause inflammation.

How is guselkumab given?

For the first 3 doses, guselkumab is given into a vein as an infusion. A typical infusion takes 1 hour. These are each 4 weeks apart.

After the first 3 doses, it is an injection, or shot, that you can give yourself. It comes in a pre-filled, autoinjector pen or as a pre-filled syringe. After the 3rd IV infusion, there are two dosing options. Either 100 mg is given every 8 weeks starting 8 weeks after the 3rd infusion OR 200 mg is given every 4 weeks starting 4 weeks after the 3rd infusion. Your provider will assist with determining the starting dose. Some patients may need to get the injections more frequently. Your provider will work with you to adjust your injection schedule as needed.

What should I do if I miss a dose of guselkumab?

Inject your missed dose as soon as you remember, and then give the next injection at the regular scheduled time. If it has been more than 5 days since your injection was due, call your provider for instructions on what to do.

When can I expect guselkumab to work?

Some patients may feel an improvement in symptoms as soon as 4 weeks of starting guselkumab. Typically, it takes up to 6-8 weeks to notice a significant benefit.

guselkumab works for most patients. The medication may stop working in some patients every year. To make sure that it keeps working, it is important to stay on track with your injection schedule and do not miss any injections.

Studies have shown that early effective treatments for ulcerative colitis are associated with long-term benefits including lowering the likelihood of needing surgery or hospitalization for health problems related to inflammatory bowel disease.

What tests are needed while I am on guselkumab?

Before beginning guselkumab treatment, you will need blood tests to check for hepatitis B and tuberculosis infections. You may also need to test for tuberculosis every year. Blood counts and liver tests are done every 4 months while on guselkumab.

What are the potential side effects of guselkumab?

Side effects with guselkumab are uncommon, but may include:

Allergic reaction: Patients may develop allergic reactions to guselkumab as with any other medication. Reactions may include rash, hives, swelling of the lips or throat. This is uncommon and can be treated with steroid and anti-histamine medications.

Injection site reaction: Pain, redness, or swelling where the injection was given may occur. This is uncommon and may be treated with antihistamine medications.

Infection: As with other medications that act on the immune system, guselkumab may increase your risk of infections. Serious infections are uncommon and only occur in a few people.

Please see the medication package insert for the full list of potential side effects.

Is guselkumab safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding?

There is limited data on the safety of guselkumab during pregnancy. If you are on guselkumab while pregnant, live virus vaccines such as the rotavirus vaccine are not recommended for your baby within the first 6 months of age.

It is known that guselkumab is transferred into breast milk, but the effect on the breastfed baby is unclear. While there is limited data on this, there is plenty of safety data on biologics that work similarly that suggests there is no harm to the mother or baby.

It is important to discuss with your provider about continuing guselkumab before, during, and after pregnancy. Most patients continue the treatment during their pregnancy.

How can I take care of my health while on guselkumab?

It is important to be up to date with your health maintenance while on guselkumab. This includes being current on all the recommended vaccines such as the flu, COVID-19, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines. You should only get the recombinant shingles vaccine (brand name: Shingrix®). Do not get the older shingles vaccines that contain the live but weakened virus. You should not get any live virus vaccines while on guselkumab or for 3 months after stopping it. Speak to your primary care doctor about whether you are up to date on all your vaccines.

What if my out-of-pocket costs are high with this treatment?

Our pharmacy team will work with you to see if you qualify for patient assistance and help with the application process.

The manufacturer of guselkumab has a patient assistance program for patients on the medication. Please go to <https://www.tremfya.com/ulcerative-colitis/savings-support/> for more information on this program.

What if I have questions about guselkumab?

Talk with your provider about any questions or concerns you may have about guselkumab.

