

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Anakinra



What is Anakinra?

- **Anakinra** belongs to a class of medicines called biologic disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (bDMARDs). It works by blocking the action of interleukin-1 (a type of inflammatory protein) present in excessive amount in patients with certain rheumatic diseases. As a result, it reduces inflammation, joint pain and swelling, and also slows down joint damage.
- **Anakinra** is used to treat moderate-to-severe rheumatoid arthritis that has not improved even after a trial of one or more conventional synthetic DMARDs (csDMARDs), cryopyrin-associated periodic syndromes and other auto-immune disorders including adult onset Still's Disease (AOSD).

How is Anakinra Administered?

- The usual dose for adults is 100 mg daily but may be reduced if you have kidney problems.
- **Anakinra** is available as a prefilled syringe injected underneath your skin (subcutaneous) at the front of thighs, lower abdomen (at least two inches away from the belly button) or upper outer arms. Avoid scars, stretch marks or areas where the skin is painful, bruised, red, scaly or hard. Before administering the medicine on your own, you or your caregiver should receive training from your rheumatology nurse clinician or pharmacist. Remember to rotate the injection site each time.
- For a more comfortable injection, leave the injection at room temperature for approximately 30 minutes or hold the pre-filled syringe gently in your hand for a few minutes. Do not shake the syringe and do not remove the cover from the syringe until you are ready to inject.
- **Anakinra** works relatively quickly and you may notice improvement within the first four to six weeks. The full benefit however, may take as long as three months. Thus, it is important that you administer your medication regularly or you may not benefit at all.
- If you miss a dose, inject the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, inject only the usual dose. Do not double the dosage.

Can Anakinra Be Taken with Other Medications?

- **Anakinra** can be taken with medications such as corticosteroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and other csDMARDs.
- Please inform your doctor, pharmacist or rheumatology nurse clinician if you are taking other medications including over-the-counter medicines, supplements or traditional/herbal remedies as they may interact with **Anakinra**.
- Discuss with your doctor before receiving any vaccines. Pneumococcal and influenza (flu) vaccinations are safe and may be given if required, although it may not be effective. Avoid live vaccines such as MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), OPV (oral polio vaccine), yellow fever or BCG (tuberculosis).

Before Treatment with Anakinra, Tell Your Doctor If You Have Any of the Following:

- An infection:
Your infection may need to be treated before Anakinra is given.
- Viral hepatitis (previous/current)
- Scheduled surgery

What are the Important Side Effects of Anakinra?

- Due to the way **Anakinra** works, some side effects may be present only after years of taking this medication. Always discuss with your doctor if you experience any side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Injection site swelling and itch (common)	Usually occurs during the start of your treatment and is mild and self-limiting. Inform your doctor if symptoms are severe or persistent.
Headache (common)	May be managed with medicine such as paracetamol or other painkillers.
Nausea, diarrhoea and abdominal pain (common)	Usually mild and may get better as your body gets used to the medicine.

	Inform your doctor if symptoms are severe or persistent.
Cold and flu-like symptoms (common)	Usually mild and may get better as your body gets used to the medicine.
Blood disorder (e.g. low white blood cells)	It is important to monitor the effects of your new medicine, particularly during the first three months of treatment. Your doctor will order regular blood tests for monitoring.
Infections (Warning signs: fever more than 38°C, chills, cough, lethargy, skin redness/swelling/pain that spreads)	Seek medical attention immediately. The doctor whom you consult should be informed that you are on Anakinra as the medication may need to be stopped while you are having an infection.

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

Are There Any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- **Anakinra** may reduce your body's ability to fight against infection, hence you should avoid crowded places and direct contact with any sick person. Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked food. See a doctor immediately if you develop a fever or feel unwell. Inform the doctor whom you consult that you are on **Anakinra**.
- There is limited information on the effect of **Anakinra** on pregnancy and breastfeeding. Inform your doctor if you are pregnant or intend to conceive. Avoid breastfeeding while on treatment with **Anakinra**.

How Do I Store Anakinra?

- Store your medication in a refrigerator between 2 – 8°C. Do not freeze.
- **Anakinra** must be a clear, colourless-to-white solution before use. There may be some translucent-to-white particles of protein in the solution. The presence of these particles does not affect the quality of the product. The

solution should not be used if it is discoloured or cloudy, or if any particles other than translucent-to-white particles are present.

How Do I Dispose the Medication?

- **After injecting Anakinra**, the used syringe should be placed in a needle-resistant container such as a used metal tin. You may bring the used metal tin to the pharmacy or clinic for proper disposal.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or rheumatology nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.