

# Infliximab infusion

## About Infliximab

Infliximab, or Remicade, is a biological agent/monoclonal antibody that binds tumour necrosis factor alpha (TNF- $\alpha$ ). TNF- $\alpha$  is a pro-inflammatory cytokine implicated in many inflammatory disorders. Infliximab helps to control TNF- $\alpha$  inflammation.

## Reasons for an Infliximab infusion

The common reasons for an Infliximab infusion include:

- **Crohn's disease:** indicated for the treatment of moderate to severe Crohn's disease, to reduce the signs and symptoms and to induce and maintain clinical remission in patients who have an inadequate response to conventional therapies.
- **Ulcerative colitis:** indicated for the treatment of moderate to severe active ulcerative colitis in patients who have had an inadequate response to conventional therapy.
- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** indicated for the reduction of signs and symptoms and prevention of structural joint damage (erosions and joint space narrowing).
- **Ankylosis spondylitis:** indicated for the reduction of signs and symptoms and improvement in physical function in patients with active disease.

## The infusion process

An Infliximab infusion will take approximately three to four hours. This can vary depending on the individual and frequency of treatment.

1. On arrival to the ward, a nurse will complete the admission paperwork. This will include taking a weight and a set of vital signs.
2. Numbing cream will be applied to the back of your child's hands and an IV drip will then be inserted.
3. A pre-medication may be ordered by the doctor to be given prior to the infusion. This will run for 30 minutes. This is to reduce the risk of a reaction to the infusion.
4. The Infliximab will then be commenced. If this is your child's first infusion then it will commence very slowly. The rate will be increased gradually throughout the infusion.
5. A nurse will frequently monitor your child's vital signs throughout the infusion.
6. Once the infusion is complete a nurse will flush the IV with normal saline and remove the IV cannula.

## Side effects

There are a number of side effects, ranging from mild to severe which can occur during or up to three days post an Infliximab infusion.

- Flu-like symptoms
- Chills, fever  $>38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Dizziness, chest pain, face flushing

Please contact your nurse or doctor if your child suffers any of the above.

## If hospitalised

### Admission

The admission process is an opportunity to discuss your child's hospital stay and any special needs they may have while in hospital or for going home.

### Visiting hours

The Cabrini Paediatric Ward does not have set visiting hours.

### Discharge

Your child will be discharged when the doctor and nurse are happy with their progress and there has been no reaction during the infusion.

- **Initial infusion:** after one hour of observation post infusion
- **Second infusion:** after 30 minutes of observation post infusion
- **Frequent infusions:** No wait post subsequent infusions (unless stipulated by the treating doctor)

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

## Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Ward using the phone number below.