

Certolizumab pegol for treating rheumatoid arthritis after inadequate response to a TNF-alpha inhibitor

Information for the public

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What has NICE said?

Certolizumab pegol (Cimzia), taken with a drug called methotrexate, is recommended. It is a possible treatment for adults with severe active rheumatoid arthritis only if:

- their disease has not responded to other disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) including at least 1 tumour necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-alpha) inhibitor, or the person cannot have them and
- they cannot have rituximab.

Certolizumab pegol can be used alone if people cannot have methotrexate.

Treatment should be stopped after 6 months if the person's rheumatoid arthritis is not

responding well enough.

What does this mean for me?

If you have severe active rheumatoid arthritis, and your doctor thinks that certolizumab pegol is the right treatment, you should be able to have it on the NHS.

Certolizumab pegol should be available on the NHS within 3 months.

If you are not eligible for treatment as described above, you should be able to continue taking certolizumab pegol until you and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

The condition and the treatment

Rheumatoid arthritis is caused by the body's immune system attacking healthy joints. The affected joints are painful, swollen and stiff, and over time become damaged and stop working properly.

Treatment for rheumatoid arthritis includes a group of drugs called disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). TNF-alpha inhibitors are a type of DMARD. These drugs improve symptoms and slow down joint damage.

Certolizumab pegol is a TNF-alpha inhibitor. It reduces inflammation in the body so that swelling of the joints is reduced and further damage may be prevented.

[NHS Choices](#) may be a good place to find out more.

These organisations can give you advice and support:

- [National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society](#), 0800 298 7650
- [Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance](#), 0203 856 1978
- [Versus Arthritis](#), 0800 520 0520
- [Arthritis Action](#), 0203 781 7120

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Accreditation

