

Belimumab: Patient drug information

Brand Names: US: Benlysta

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat lupus.
- It is used to treat kidney problems caused by lupus.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have an infection.
- If you have nervous system problems caused by lupus.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- You may have more of a chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu. Some infections have been very bad and even deadly.
- Make sure you are up to date with all your vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Talk with your doctor if you have recently had a vaccine or before getting any vaccines. Vaccine use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- This drug may lower how well the immune system works. Drugs that do this may raise the risk of certain types of cancer. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If you may become pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your doctor how long to use birth control. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- Infusion reactions have happened with this drug. These have happened on the same day as the infusion. Tell your doctor if you have any bad effects during or after the infusion.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- New or worse behavior or mood changes like depression or thoughts of suicide.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Slow heartbeat.
- Muscle pain.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Shortness of breath.
- Cold sweats.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Trouble sleeping.
- Headache.
- Upset stomach.
- Diarrhea.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Pain in arms or legs.

How is this drug best taken?

It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.