



Disease-modifying treatments for MS

A resource to help MS health professionals encourage shared decision-making among people with MS



UPDATED



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EXPLAINER CARD

About the cards

WHAT ARE THE MS-SELFIE INFOCARDS AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

The MS-Selfie Infocards are bite-sized information cards intended to aid treatment choices for people with MS. They provide an overview of the key aspects of DMTs for MS, to enable easy comparison of any treatments you are considering. The parameters are standardised, allowing for a broad overview across all the DMTs.

These cards are not meant for use in isolation. Please consult other sources such as the MS-Selfie site and the summary of product characteristics for each DMT you may be considering starting. Any treatment decision should be discussed with your MS healthcare team.

HOW CAN I TRUST THE MS-SELFIE INFOCARDS?

We regularly update the MS-Selfie Infocards to ensure they match with the latest research and product characteristics for DMTs. The scores for each drug were based on the [ClinicSpeak DMT decision making tool](#) and content from [MS-Selfie microsite](#). MS neurologists fact checked all the DMT “about” sections and helped to determine and adjust the scores.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in these cards are those of Professor Giovannoni and his team. The advice is intended as general and should not be interpreted as personal clinical advice. If you have any queries or problems, please contact your healthcare professional for help.

For more information



EXPLAINER CARD

Parameters

EFFECTIVENESS

A high score denotes the drug as very effective at preventing relapses or long-term disability. This is based on a [published network meta-analysis](#).

SIDE EFFECTS

A low score denotes the drug has few or rare short-term or long-term side effects. The score does not correlate to a percentage. More information can be found in each summary of product characteristics.

IMPACTS

Cancer risk is based on [published pharmacovigilance analysis](#). Family planning reflects how compatible the drug is with becoming pregnant and fertility. Vaccinations signals whether the drug impacts response to vaccinations. Clinic visits involve appointments for monitoring, like blood tests, and visits to receive treatment.

"ABOUT" SECTION

Key information is provided on the action of the drug, important side effects, monitoring, any serious risks, and family planning. Detailed information on every aspect of the drug can be found in the summary of product characteristics.

LICENSING

Licensing reflects whether the drug is licensed or not in the UK. The indications are based on those in England. Active MS includes any type of active MS, i.e. also highly active and rapidly evolving severe MS. Check with your MS team to find out what drugs you are eligible for.

EXPLAINER CARD

Symbols and colour coding and QR codes

ADMINISTRATION SYMBOLS



Infusion



Tablets



Stem cell
transplant



Injection



Injector pen

COLOUR CODING



Immunomodulation



Immunosuppression



Selective
immune-reconstitution therapy



Non-selective
immune-reconstitution therapy

QR CODES

Please scan the QR codes or click the links on the back of each card for more information on each DMT. These cards are a brief overview; the MS-Selfie site and summary of product characteristics for each DMT provide more in-depth information to aid decision making.

EXPLAINER CARD

DMT types

MAINTENANCE THERAPY

Maintenance therapy is given continuously, without an interruption in dosing. Although it has the ability to induce long-term remission, it cannot result in a cure. Maintenance therapies include immunomodulators and immunosuppressants. The former tend to have a lower efficacy, but also a lower risk profile than immunosuppressors, which can be more effective. The benefits include ability to switch to a different drug relatively easily if a poor response occurs.

IMMUNE RECONSTITUTION THERAPY

An immune reconstitution therapy (IRT) is given as a short course and has the ability to induce long-term remission and, in some cases, the possibility of disease stability. They generally have very high efficacy but are also perceived to be higher risk than maintenance therapies. IRT has an irreversible effect on the immune system. IRT can be selective, targeting specific parts of the immune system, or non-selective, impacting the whole immune system.

Abbreviations:

pwMS = people with MS

PPMS = primary progressive MS

RRMS = relapsing remitting MS

CIS = clinically isolated syndrome

DMT = disease modifying treatment

SPMS = secondary progressive MS

CNS = central nervous system

PML = progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy

ALEMTUZUMAB

TRADE NAME: LEMTRADA / CAMPATH



TYPE: non-selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: 5 day course and a 3 day course a year later

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active
relapsing MS

CIS

RRMS

- Alemtuzumab is an anti-CD52 monoclonal antibody that depletes the T and B cells to stop them destroying myelin in the CNS.
- Compared to beta interferons, the drug reduces relapses by over 50% and slows disability progression by 42%.
- There is a risk of developing another autoimmune disease following treatment, commonly a thyroid condition or immune thrombocytopenia, a problem with the blood.
- Common side effects include common infections and general malaise after an infusion. 4 in 10 people develop a thyroid problem which requires lifelong medication.
- Monitoring post-alemtuzumab treatment lasts for 4 years. It is necessary to follow a specific diet for one month following infusion due to the risk of listeria infection.
- Pregnancy should be delayed until 4 months after the second treatment cycle of alemtuzumab. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.





ALEMTUZUMAB

TRADE NAME: LEMTRADA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



AZATHIOPRINE

TRADE NAME: IMURAN

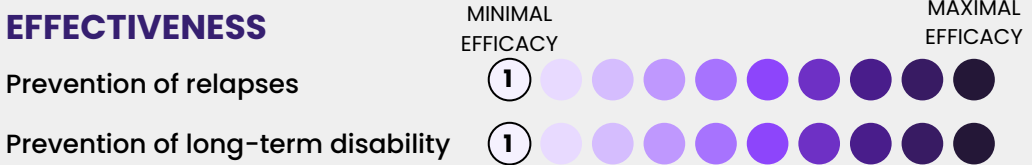


TYPE: immunosuppression

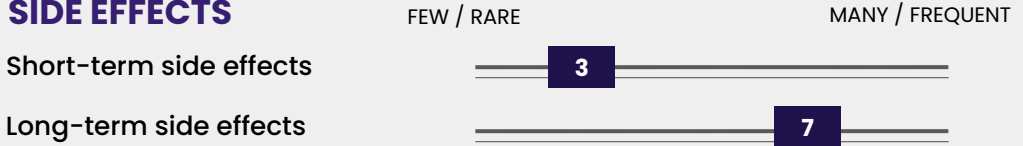
DURATION: ongoing - taken once or twice a day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS



SIDE EFFECTS



IMPACTS

Cancer risk	no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
Family planning	compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
Vaccinations	good response	moderate response	poor response
Clinic visits	minimal	moderate	many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Azathioprine is an immunosuppressant used in conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. It works by inhibiting the formation of purines which are needed to make DNA, resulting in fewer white blood cells being made.
- The efficacy in MS is not yet clear.
- Side effects include nausea, anaemia, and liver damage. Low white blood cell count occurs in more than 1 in 10 people.
- Those on azathioprine require monitoring of blood count and liver function. It is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer and lymphoma if taken for more than 5 years.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding are possible on azathioprine; however, discussion with your neurologist prior to becoming pregnant is advisable.



AZATHIOPRINE

TRADE NAME: IMURAN

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



CLADRIBINE

TRADE NAME: MAVENCLAD



TYPE: selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: 4 x 5 day courses (across 2 years)

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
good response	moderate response	poor response
minimal	moderate	many

Family planning

Vaccinations

Clinic visits

ABOUT

LICENSED

Highly active
relapsing MS

Rapidly
evolving
severe MS

- Cladribine acts by primarily destroying B cells to prevent them from damaging the myelin in the CNS.
- A third or fourth course of cladribine may be required.
- Compared to placebo, relapses are reduced by 58% and the worsening of disability is slowed by 33%.
- Over 1 in 4 people get lymphopenia, a low white blood cell count, which can last for a long time. This may mean the second course of cladribine has to be delayed or, in some cases, will not be administered.
- The most common side effects following cladribine are skin reactions and, rarely, hair loss or thinning.
- There is an increased risk of herpes infection which causes shingles and oral cold sores.
- Pregnancy should be avoided for 6 months after finishing cladribine. Contraception is strongly recommended.





CLADRIBINE

TRADE NAME: MAVENCLAD

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



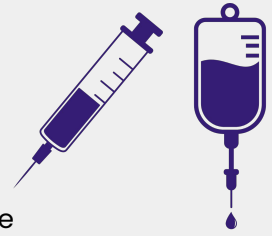
CLADRIBINE

TRADE NAME: LEUSTAT / LITAK

TYPE: selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: short course over 2 years, depends on route

TAKEN: injection / infusion



EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

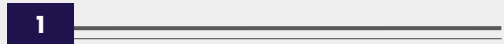
FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Cladribine acts by primarily destroying B cells to prevent them from damaging the myelin in the CNS.
- Leustat and Litak are non-oral formulations of cladribine that may be available for off-label use in MS.
- These formulations of cladribine likely have similar efficacy and side effects to the tablet formulations but this is not yet proven.
- Side effects of the injection formulation of cladribine in a small trial included infections, especially shingles, and gastrointestinal symptoms.
- Pregnancy should be avoided for 6 months after finishing cladribine. Contraception is strongly recommended.



CLADRIBINE (OFF-LABEL FORMULATION)

TRADE NAME: LEUSTAT/ LITAK

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



CYCLOPHOSPHAMIDE



TRADE NAME: CYCLOPHOSPHAMIDE (generic)

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - depends on protocol

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

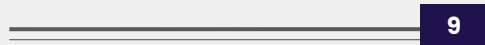
FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Cyclophosphamide reduces the number of T and B cells when used to treat MS.
- It is used to treat vasculitis and also used as a chemotherapy agent for cancer.
- The efficacy of cyclophosphamide in MS is unclear.
- Short-term side effects include nausea, infertility, bladder irritation, hair loss and infections. Long-term side effects include potential triggering of early menopause and increased risk of leukaemia, lymphoma, and bladder cancer.
- Cyclophosphamide toxicity increases with more doses.
- Cyclophosphamide can lead to infertility. Pregnancy should be avoided for up to a year after stopping treatment. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.



CYCLOPHOSPHAMIDE

TRADE NAME: CYCLOPHOSPHAMIDE (generic)

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



DIMETHYL FUMARATE



TRADE NAME: TECFIDERA

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet twice a day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

RRMS with 2
significant
relapses in the
past 2 years

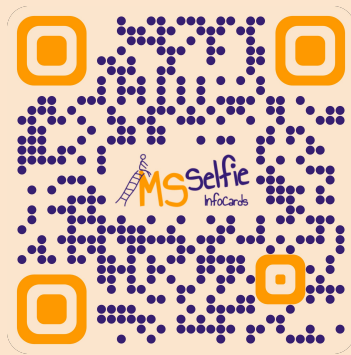
- Dimethyl fumarate dampens down inflammation to reduce damage in the CNS and reduces white blood cell count.
- Compared to placebo, dimethyl fumarate reduces relapses by 53% and slows disability worsening by 38%.
- Around 4 in 10 people get mild side effects including flushing, feeling hot, nausea and vomiting.
- People taking dimethyl fumarate are at risk (around 0.002%) of a very rare brain infection called PML (post-2017 data).
- There is an increased risk of breast, genitourinary and nervous system cancers.
- It is best to avoid pregnancy on dimethyl fumarate. Please discuss with your neurologist if you or your partner wishes to become pregnant whilst on dimethyl fumarate.



DIMETHYL FUMARATE

TRADE NAME: TECFIDERA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



DIROXIMEL FUMARATE



TRADE NAME: VUMERITY

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet twice a day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

RRMS with 2 significant relapses in the past 2 years

- Diroximel fumarate dampens inflammation and works similarly to dimethyl fumarate.
- It has a similar impact on reduction in relapses as dimethyl fumarate.
- Around 1 in 3 people had stomach or gut issues in the trial of this drug. Around 1 in 10 people get side effects of a cold or chest infection.
- There is an increased risk of breast, genitourinary, and nervous system cancers.
- It is best to avoid pregnancy on diroximel fumarate. Please discuss with your neurologist if you or your partner wishes to become pregnant whilst on diroximel fumarate.



DIROXIMEL FUMARATE

TRADE NAME: VUMERITY

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



FINGOLIMOD

TRADE NAME: GILENYA



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Highly active relapsing MS

Rapidly evolving severe MS in some cases

- Fingolimod prevents T and B cells from leaving the lymph nodes hence preventing damage to the myelin in the CNS.
- Compared to placebo, relapses are reduced by 54% and disability progression reduced by 30%.
- More than 1 in 10 people get diarrhoea and headaches. Rarely, swelling of the yellow spot at the back of your retina may occur. You will be asked to have this checked with ophthalmology.
- Those on fingolimod are at an increased risk of basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin, and lymphoma.
- pwMS on fingolimod are at an increased risk of infections including herpes.
- The first dose of fingolimod requires monitoring in hospital as it can cause temporary heart rate and blood pressure changes.
- Pregnancy must be avoided for 2 months after stopping fingolimod as it can harm a fetus. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.





FINGOLIMOD

TRADE NAME: GILENYA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



FLUDARABINE

TRADE NAME: FLUDARA



TYPE: selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: not yet established in MS

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

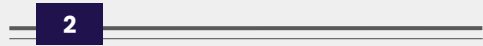
FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Fludarabine is a similar drug to cladribine. It is a chemotherapy drug currently used in the treatment of some blood cancers.
- It has been tested in combination with interferon beta drugs and showed good tolerability for pwMS.
- Fludarabine can cause low red blood cells, low platelets and low neutrophils so requires regular blood monitoring.
- Common side effects also include increased risk of infection, fatigue, nausea and vomiting.
- Rarely, people get more serious side effects including liver changes and a bleed from the bowel.
- Pregnancy must be avoided for 6 months after stopping fludarabine. Contraception is strongly recommended. Long-term fludarabine treatment may lead to infertility.



FLUDARABINE

TRADE NAME: FLUDARA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



GLATIRAMER ACETATE



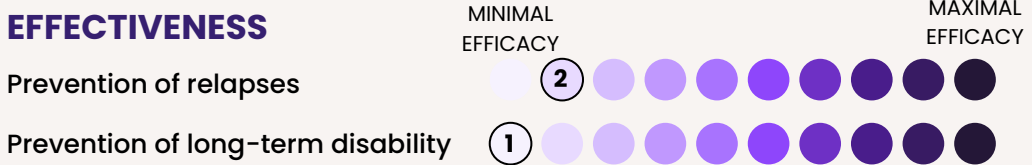
TRADE NAME: BRABIO / COPAXONE

TYPE: immunomodulation

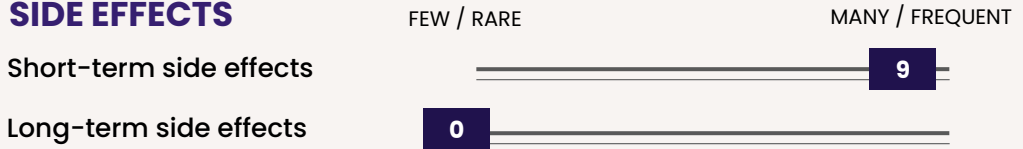
DURATION: ongoing - once a day or 3 times per week

TAKEN: injection / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS



SIDE EFFECTS



IMPACTS

Cancer risk	no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
Family planning	compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
Vaccinations	good response	moderate response	poor response
Clinic visits	minimal	moderate	many

ABOUT

LICENSED

CIS

RRMS with 1-2 relapses in the past 2 years

- Glatiramer acetate is a mixture of proteins resembling myelin that is recognised by immune cells, indirectly preventing the destruction of real myelin.
- Glatiramer acetate reduces the number of relapses by around 34% compared to placebo.
- More than 1 in 10 people get mild side effects such as flu-like symptoms, a rash or headaches. Soreness at the site of injection is common. Lipoatrophy, permanent damage underneath the skin at injection sites, is a reason some people stop treatment with glatiramer acetate.
- Copaxone can be used during pregnancy or breastfeeding.



GLATIRAMER ACETATE

TRADE NAME: BRABIO/ COPAXONE

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



HAEMATOPOIETIC STEM CELL TRANSPLANTATION



TYPE: non-selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: one month in isolation

TAKEN: procedure

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL EFFICACY

MAXIMAL EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

NHS Funded

Some people with rapidly evolving severe MS

- Haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) may be an option for those who are early on in their disease course.
- Chemotherapy destroys the body's immune cells. The stem cells extracted from the blood prior to chemotherapy are reintroduced and repopulate the immune system.
- In a trial of people with very active relapsing MS, 99% of people who had HSCT had no relapses for 1 year and 94% had no worsening in disability over 3 years.
- Side effects can include an increased long-term risk of infections, autoimmune conditions and early menopause. Brain fog in the 2 years following treatment is a reported side effect.
- HSCT recipients are at an increased risk of cancer in general, particularly leukaemia, lymphoma, and bladder cancer.
- The chemotherapy element can cause infertility.



HAEMATOPOIETIC STEM CELL TRANSPLANTATION

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [summary of the procedure here](#):



INTERFERON BETA-1a



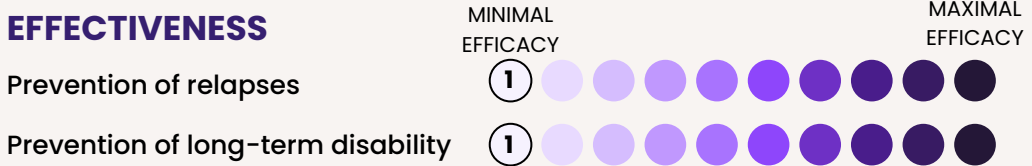
TRADE NAME: AVONEX

TYPE: immunomodulation

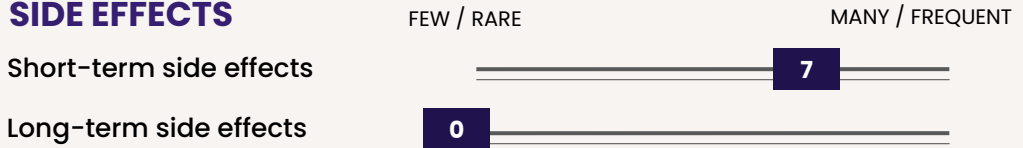
DURATION: ongoing - once per week

TAKEN: injection pen / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS



SIDE EFFECTS



IMPACTS

Cancer risk	no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
Family planning	compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
Vaccinations	good response	moderate response	poor response
Clinic visits	minimal	moderate	many

ABOUT

LICENSED

CIS

RRMS with 1-2 relapses in the past 2 years

- Interferon beta-1a is a type of beta interferon. Beta interferons are synthetic versions of proteins produced by white blood cells when the body is tackling viral infections.
- Avonex is injected into the muscle once a week.
- Interferon beta-1a drugs reduce relapses by around 30% compared to placebo.
- Common side effects following injection can include flu-like symptoms and red itchy skin at the injection site.
- There is potential increased risk of cancer on interferons.
- Pregnancy on interferons is possible once established on treatment, otherwise a 1 month delay is required.
- Breastfeeding on interferons is encouraged.



INTERFERON BETA-1a

TRADE NAME: AVONEX

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



INTERFERON BETA-1a



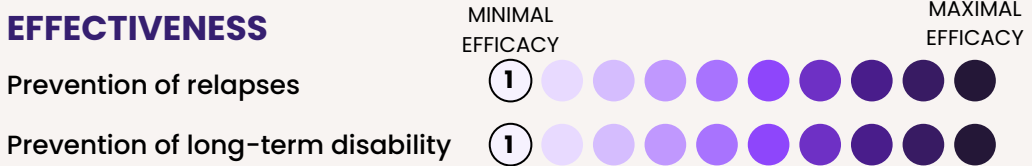
TRADE NAME: REBIF

TYPE: immunomodulation

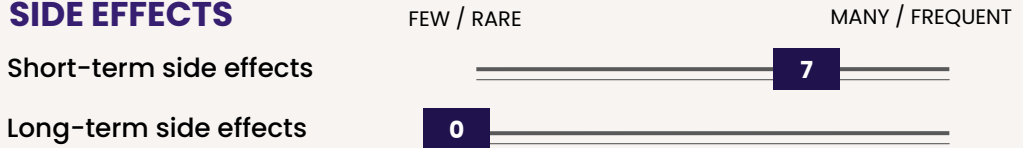
DURATION: ongoing - 3 times per week

TAKEN: injection pen / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS



SIDE EFFECTS



IMPACTS

Cancer risk	no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
Family planning	compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
Vaccinations	good response	moderate response	poor response
Clinic visits	minimal	moderate	many

ABOUT

LICENSED

CIS

RRMS with 1-2 relapses in the past 2 years

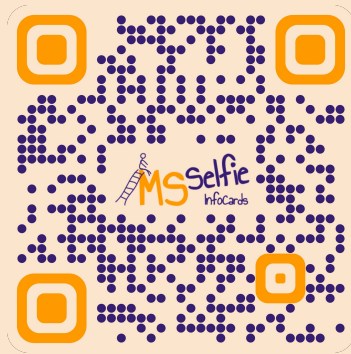
- Interferon beta-1a is a type of beta interferon. Beta interferons are synthetic versions of proteins produced by white blood cells when the body is tackling viral infections.
- Rebif is injected under the skin 3 times a week.
- Interferon beta-1a drugs reduce relapses by around 30% compared to placebo.
- Common side effects following injection can include flu-like symptoms and red itchy skin at the injection site.
- There is potential increased risk of cancer on interferons.
- Pregnancy on interferons is possible once established on treatment, otherwise a 1 month delay is required.
- Breastfeeding on interferons is encouraged.



INTERFERON BETA-1a

TRADE NAME: REBIF

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



INTERFERON BETA-1b



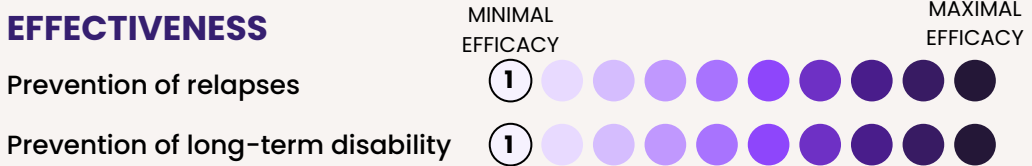
TRADE NAME: BETAFERON / EXTAVIA

TYPE: immunomodulation

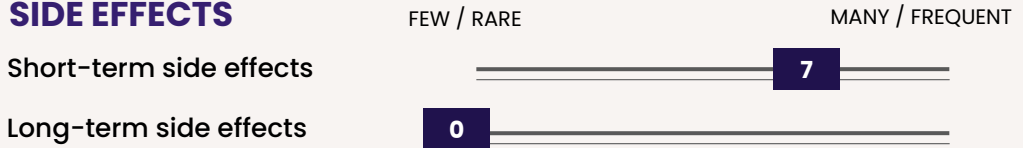
DURATION: ongoing - every 2 days

TAKEN: injection / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS



SIDE EFFECTS



IMPACTS

Cancer risk	no / low impact	unknown impact	increased risk of some cancers
Family planning	compatible	short-term incompatible	possible long-term impacts
Vaccinations	good response	moderate response	poor response
Clinic visits	minimal	moderate	many

ABOUT

LICENSED

SPMS

RRMS with 2 relapses in the past 2 years

- Interferon beta-1b is a type of beta interferon. Beta interferons are synthetic versions of proteins produced by white blood cells when the body is tackling viral infections.
- Betaferon and Extavia reduce the number of relapses by around 30% compared to placebo.
- Side effects can include flu-like symptoms for over 1 in 10 people and red itchy skin at the injection site.
- There is potential increased risk of cancer on interferons.
- Pregnancy on interferons is possible once established on treatment, otherwise a 1 month delay is required. Breastfeeding on interferons is encouraged.



INTERFERON BETA-1b

TRADE NAME: BETAFERON / EXTAVIA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



LEFLUNOMIDE

TRADE NAME: LEFLUNOMIDE (oral, generic)



TYPE: immunomodulation

DURATION: not yet established in MS, likely 1 tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Leflunomide is similar to teriflunomide. Teriflunomide is its primary active metabolite.
- Leflunomide is currently used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis.
- Common side effects include abdominal pain, increased hair loss, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and weight loss.
- Infections are more common in people on leflunomide.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding should be avoided on leflunomide. Pregnancy should be delayed until washout treatment is completed. Without washout treatment, pregnancy should be delayed for up to 2 years after stopping leflunomide. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.



LEFLUNOMIDE

TRADE NAME: LEFLUNOMIDE (oral, generic)

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



METHOTREXATE

TRADE NAME: METHOTREXATE (oral, generic)



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet once a week

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability

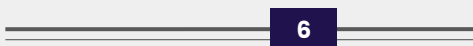


SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Methotrexate is an immunosuppressant used in other conditions such as cancer, arthritis and psoriasis.
- It has been shown to reduce relapse rate and disease progression in the short term in small studies of MS.
- Short-term side effects may include headaches and nausea and vomiting. Common side effects seen in patients taking methotrexate for other conditions include diarrhoea, hair loss and loss of appetite. Liver problems, lung inflammation and kidney problems are rarer side effects.
- Those on methotrexate are at an increased risk of melanoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and lung cancer.
- Pregnancy should be delayed for 3 months after stopping methotrexate. Breastfeeding should be avoided. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.



METHOTREXATE

TRADE NAME: METHOTREXATE (oral, generic)

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



MITOXANTRONE



TRADE NAME: NOVANTRONE (US-licensed brand)

TYPE: non-selective immune reconstitution therapy (IRT)

DURATION: every 1-3 months over 2-3 years

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability

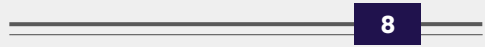


SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

**Not
Licensed
for MS**

Licensed in
some
countries
outside of the
UK

- Mitoxantrone has been shown to be more effective in SPMS than other types of MS. The effect on relapses and disability progression in MS is not yet clear.
- Common side effects include nausea, increased risk of infections and hair loss. Acute leukaemia is a rare side effect.
- Monitoring of liver function is required for those taking mitoxantrone. Only 8-12 doses of mitoxantrone over 2-3 years per lifetime are recommended due to associations with cardiac dysfunction.
- Pregnancy should be delayed for 6 months after stopping mitoxantrone. Breastfeeding should be avoided. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.
- Although unlicensed in the UK, mitoxantrone is licensed for MS in Austria, Germany, France, and the USA.



MITOXANTRONE

TRADE NAME: NOVANTRONE (US-licensed brand)

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



NATALIZUMAB

TRADE NAME: TYSABRI / TYRUKO



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every 4 weeks

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Rapidly
evolving
severe MS

- Natalizumab blocks the transport of immune cells into the brain.
- It reduces relapses by 68% and slows disability worsening by 42% compared to placebo.
- Common side effects after an infusion include dizziness, nausea and vomiting, a sore throat and itchy skin.
- Mainly in pwMS who carry the John-Cunningham virus there is a risk of a severe brain infection called PML (about 0.4%) that increases with longstanding use of the drug.
- There is an increased risk of haematological malignancies.
- Infusions can be continued throughout pregnancy. It is advisable to discuss with your neurologist prior to becoming pregnant. Natalizumab can be continued whilst breastfeeding.



NATALIZUMAB

TRADE NAME: TYSABRI / TYRUKO

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



NATALIZUMAB



TRADE NAME: TYSABRI

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every 4 weeks

TAKEN: subcutaneous injection

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Rapidly
evolving
severe MS

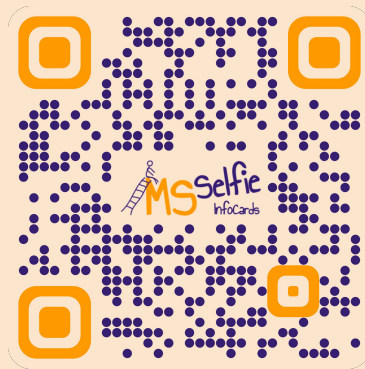
- Natalizumab blocks the transport of immune cells into the brain.
- It reduces relapses by 68% and slows disability worsening by 42% compared to placebo.
- Common side effects after an injection include dizziness, nausea and vomiting, a sore throat and itchy skin.
- Mainly in pwMS who carry the John-Cunningham virus there is a risk of a severe brain infection called PML (about 0.4%) that increases with longstanding use of the drug.
- There is an increased risk of haematological malignancies.
- Injections can be continued throughout pregnancy. It is advisable to discuss with your neurologist prior to becoming pregnant. Natalizumab can be continued whilst breastfeeding.



NATALIZUMAB

TRADE NAME: TYSABRI

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



OCRELIZUMAB



TRADE NAME: OCREVUS

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every 6 months

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL EFFICACY

MAXIMAL EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active relapsing forms of MS

Active primary progressive MS

- Ocrelizumab is an anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody that depletes B cells to stop them destroying myelin in the CNS.
- For PPMS, it has been shown to slow disability by 25% compared to placebo. For RRMS, it has been shown to reduce relapses by 46% and slow disability worsening by 40% compared to beta interferons.
- About 4 in 10 people get skin rashes, fever and sore throat after infusion. Response to vaccination is reduced.
- There is an increased risk of severe infections for pwMS on ocrelizumab, especially those who are already more disabled.
- Pregnancy is possible at any time on ocrelizumab. Infusions should be stopped during pregnancy.





OCRELIZUMAB

TRADE NAME: OCREVUS

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



OFATUMUMAB



TRADE NAME: KESIMPTA

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every month

TAKEN: injection pen / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active MS

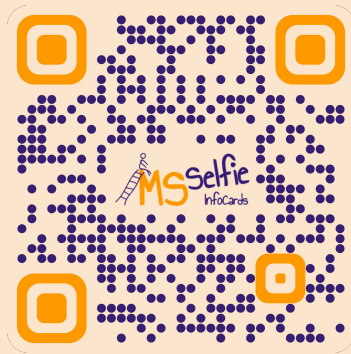
- Ofatumumab targets the CD20 marker on B cells so that they cannot damage myelin. It also reduces inflammation.
- It is taken via injection using an injector pen once a month.
- Compared to teriflunomide, ofatumumab was shown to reduce relapses by around 60% and slow disability worsening by 34%.
- Side effects of headaches and flushing occur in around 1 in 5 people on ofatumumab, and more than 1 in 10 people get common infections on the drug. The response to vaccines is reduced.
- Pregnancy is possible at any time on ofatumumab. Injections should be stopped during pregnancy but started again straight after birth. Breastfeeding is safe on this drug.



OFATUMUMAB

TRADE NAME: KESIMPTA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



OFATUMUMAB



TRADE NAME: BONSPRI

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every month

TAKEN: injection / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active MS

- Ofatumumab targets the CD20 marker on B cells so that they cannot damage myelin. It also reduces inflammation.
- This product comes in a vial and has to be drawn up into a syringe and self-administered as an injection once a month.
- Compared to teriflunomide, ofatumumab was shown to reduce relapses by around 60% and slow disability worsening by 34%.
- Side effects of headaches and flushing occur in around 1 in 5 people on ofatumumab, and more than 1 in 10 people get common infections on the drug. The response to vaccines is reduced.
- Pregnancy is possible at any time on ofatumumab. Injections should be stopped during pregnancy but started again straight after birth. Breastfeeding is safe on this drug.





OFATUMUMAB

TRADE NAME: BONSPRI

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



OZANIMOD



TRADE NAME: ZEPOSIA

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL EFFICACY

MAXIMAL EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active MS

- Ozanimod prevents T and B cells from leaving the lymph nodes so that they cannot damage the myelin in the CNS.
- Compared to beta interferons, ozanimod reduces relapses by 38%. The impact on disability progression is not yet clear.
- Common side effects include headaches, increased infections, and increased levels of liver enzymes. Shingles is seen rarely.
- The first dose of ozanimod can transiently lower heart rate.. Monitoring of the heart rate and rhythm is carried out prior to starting ozanimod.
- Those on ozanimod are at an increased risk of basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin, and lymphoma.
- Pregnancy should be avoided for 3 months after stopping ozanimod. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.





OZANIMOD

TRADE NAME: ZEPOSIA

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



PEGINTERFERON BETA-1a



TRADE NAME: PLEGRIDY

TYPE: immunomodulation

DURATION: ongoing - once every 2 weeks

TAKEN: injection pen / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active MS

- Peginterferon beta 1a is a type of beta interferon. Beta interferons are synthetic versions of these proteins produced by white blood cells when the body is tackling viral infections.
- Compared to placebo, peginterferon beta 1a reduces relapses by around 30%. How well it slows the worsening of disability is not yet clear.
- Over 1 in 10 people will experience flu-like symptoms, headaches or bruised and itchy skin at the injection site. More rarely mood changes and liver abnormalities can occur.
- There is potential increased risk of cancer on interferons.
- Pregnancy on interferons is possible once established on treatment, otherwise a 1 month delay is required. Breastfeeding on interferons is encouraged.



PEGINTERFERON BETA-1 α

TRADE NAME: PLEGRIDY

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



PONESIMOD

TRADE NAME: PONVORY



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active MS

- Ponesimod prevents T and B cells from leaving the lymph nodes to reduce the damage they cause to myelin in the CNS.
- It reduces relapses by 30% compared to teriflunomide and is as effective at slowing disability progression.
- More than 1 in 10 people get a rise in liver enzymes, which subsides for most people and does not require them to stop the drug. Rarer side effects include swelling in part of the retina.
- Those on ponesimod are at an increased risk of basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin, and lymphoma.
- Infections are more common in people on ponesimod than on other DMTs, especially colds and chest infections.
- Pregnancy should be delayed until one week after stopping ponesimod. Breastfeeding should be avoided. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.





PONESIMOD

TRADE NAME: PONVORY

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



RITUXIMAB

TRADE NAME: MABTHERA / RITUXAN



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - about once a year once established

TAKEN: infusion

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL EFFICACY

MAXIMAL EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

Not
Licensed
for MS

- Rituximab is a monoclonal anti-CD20 antibody. It targets B cells to prevent them from further destroying the myelin in the CNS.
- Rituximab is currently in clinical trials for MS but is already used in the treatment of white blood cell cancers and rheumatoid granulomatosis.
- It is administered by infusion about once a year once the regimen is established.
- Infusion-related general malaise is common.
- Response to vaccination is reduced in people taking rituximab and there is an increased risk of severe infections.
- It is advised to delay pregnancy until 6 months after stopping rituximab.



RITUXIMAB

TRADE NAME: MABTHERA/ RITUXAN

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



SIPONIMOD

TRADE NAME: MAYZENT



TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term incompatible

possible long-term impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active SPMS

- Siponimod acts by stopping T and B cells from leaving the lymph nodes and damaging myelin in the CNS.
- Compared to placebo, siponimod reduces relapses by 46%, and slows the worsening of disability by 37%.
- Side effects include headaches and reduced white blood cell counts.
- Those on siponimod are at an increased risk of basal and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin, and lymphoma.
- The metabolism of siponimod is determined by your genotype of a specific enzyme which must be checked before starting siponimod as it determines the dose you need to take.
- There is reduced vaccination response in people on siponimod and infections are increased, particularly herpes infection.
- Pregnancy should be delayed until 10 days after stopping siponimod. Breastfeeding should also be avoided whilst on the drug. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.





SIPONIMOD

TRADE NAME: MAYZENT

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



TERIFLUNOMIDE

TRADE NAME: TERIFLUNOMIDE (oral, generic)



TYPE: immunomodulation

DURATION: ongoing - one tablet per day

TAKEN: tablet form / self-administered

EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

RRMS with 2
relapses in the
past 2 years

- Teriflunomide prevents T and B cells from dividing and T cells from getting into the CNS.
- Teriflunomide reduces relapses by about 30% compared to placebo and slows the worsening of disability by 30%.
- The risk of side effects is low but may include headaches, diarrhoea, nausea and transient thinning of the hair for around 1 in 10 people. Liver function disorders are also a side effect of teriflunomide. Teriflunomide may increase the likelihood of getting common infections.
- Pregnancy must be avoided whilst on teriflunomide and for 2 years afterwards, unless medication is taken to speed up reducing the amount of the drug in the body. Breastfeeding should also be avoided whilst on teriflunomide. Contraception is strongly recommended during treatment.



TERIFLUNOMIDE

TRADE NAME: TERIFLUNOMIDE (oral, generic)

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



UBLITUXIMAB

TRADE NAME: BRIUMVI

TYPE: immunosuppression

DURATION: ongoing - once every 6 months

TAKEN: infusion



EFFECTIVENESS

MINIMAL
EFFICACY

MAXIMAL
EFFICACY

Prevention of relapses



Prevention of long-term disability



SIDE EFFECTS

FEW / RARE

MANY / FREQUENT

Short-term side effects



Long-term side effects



IMPACTS

Cancer risk

no / low impact

unknown impact

increased risk of
some cancers

Family planning

compatible

short-term
incompatible

possible long-term
impacts

Vaccinations

good response

moderate
response

poor response

Clinic visits

minimal

moderate

many

ABOUT

LICENSED

Active
relapsing
forms of MS

- Ublituximab is an anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody that depletes the B cells to stop them destroying myelin in the CNS.
- For RRMS, it has been shown to reduce relapses by $\geq 45\%$ compared to teriflunomide. There was a difference favouring ublituximab over teriflunomide in relation to disability progression in the extension study.
- Infusion reactions are infrequent. Response to vaccination is reduced.
- There is an increased risk of severe infections for pwMS on ublituximab, especially those who are already more disabled.
- Contraception should be used while receiving ublituximab and for at least 4 months after the last infusion. Infusions should be stopped during pregnancy and avoided in the first week of breastfeeding.



UBLITUXIMAB

TRADE NAME: BRIUMVI

For more information visit [MS-Selfie](#):



View [Summary of Product Characteristics here](#):



WHAT DMT IS BEST FOR YOU?

Consider how important each factor is to you when choosing your DMT

	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL										EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
PREVENTION OF RELAPSES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
PREVENTION OF LONG-TERM DISABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
SHORT-TERM SIDE EFFECTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
LONG-TERM SIDE EFFECTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
CANCER RISK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
AMOUNT OF CLINIC VISITS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
IMPACT ON FAMILY PLANNING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
VACCINATION RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

These cards are intended as a tool to aid decision making. Ensure you discuss what factors are important to you with your MS Team.

THANK YOU

Thank you for using the MS-Selfie InfoCards.
Please use the links to the MS-Selfie
microsite page for each licensed DMT, and
the summary of product characteristics for
more information on any given drug.

We welcome
continued feedback
for future editions.
Please scan the QR
code or [click here](#) for
the feedback form.



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