

Does Leflunomide affect fertility or pregnancy?

Leflunomide may cause serious birth defects. Do not take Leflunomide if you are planning to conceive, during pregnancy or when breastfeeding. It is necessary for men and women to use contraception while on Leflunomide.. The drug may remain in the body for up to two years after the last dose. Women must not become pregnant and men must not father children within two years of stopping Leflunomide; unless medicine is given to get rid of it from your body system (consult your doctor). **You must not take Leflunomide unless you are on reliable contraception.**

Can I have immunisations while on Leflunomide?

Pneumococcal, influenza, hepatitis A and B, tetanus vaccinations are allowed. Avoid immunisations with live vaccines such as polio, varicella (chicken pox), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

Are there any alternatives to Leflunomide?

Your doctor will advise on the safest and most effective option. If you have any concerns, do raise them with your doctor.

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Medication Information for Patients LEFLUNOMIDE



Why am I being prescribed Leflunomide?

Leflunomide is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and other types of arthritis where the body's immune system (defence system) attacks its own tissues. Leflunomide works by modifying the immune system and reduces the inflammation that causes pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints.

When do I take Leflunomide?

Leflunomide is taken either once a day or once a week on the same day, depending on the dose. It can be taken with or without food.

What dose do I take?

Leflunomide comes in strengths of 20mg and 100mg. Your doctor will prescribe the most appropriate dosage for you.

When does Leflunomide work?

The effects of Leflunomide will not be visible immediately. It may take four to six weeks after starting leflunomide to experience an improvement in joint pain or swelling. Complete benefits may only be experienced six months after starting the medication.

How should I store Leflunomide?

The tablets should be stored at room temperature. Keep out of reach from children.

What are the possible risks associated with Leflunomide?

Side effects	Warning signs	Things you need to do
Headache, giddiness		Inform your doctor
Feeling sick, nausea, vomiting, abdominal (stomach) pain, mouth ulcers, diarrhoea		Inform your doctor; if persistent, your doctor may change your medication
Dropping of hair, dry skin, rashes or eczema		If persistent, inform your doctor.
Rise in blood pressure		Inform your doctor. You may need to start a blood pressure lowering medications
Low blood count	Easy bruising, severe sore throat, tiredness, paleness	Do regular blood count monitoring as advised
Liver inflammation	Yellow eyes, tea coloured urine, constant abdominal pain	Inform your doctor if you have a history of liver disease. Do regular liver function tests.
Risk of infections	e.g. herpes zoster (Shingles)	Avoid close contact with people with coughs / colds. Please discuss any planned vaccinations with your doctor

Please seek medical attention if you experience any of the above symptoms.

Do I have to do any blood tests while on Leflunomide?

Leflunomide may occasionally cause low blood counts and liver inflammation. These are usually reversible if detected early. **It is not safe to continue Leflunomide if you do not come for regular blood checks.**

Should I avoid any medication while on Leflunomide?

Generally, you should show your doctor or pharmacist all other medications you are taking or plan to take, including supplements and over the counter medications.

May I drink alcohol while taking Leflunomide?

Alcohol intake should be restricted to one unit per day as the combination of alcohol and Leflunomide may increase the risk of liver problems. One unit is equivalent to a can of beer (300ml) or a glass of wine (120ml) or a single shot of whisky (30ml).

What if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you remember. If you take Leflunomide once a week, adjust the timing of your next dose to be one week from the current dose. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. **Do not double the next dose to make up for the missed dose.**