

The content on the UpToDate website is not intended nor recommended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your own physician or other qualified health care professional regarding any medical questions or conditions. The use of this website is governed by the [UpToDate Terms of Use](#) ©2016 UpToDate, Inc.

Etanercept: Patient drug information Lexicomp®

Copyright 1978-2016 Lexicomp, Inc. All rights reserved.

(For additional information [see "Etanercept: Drug information"](#) and [see "Etanercept: Pediatric drug information"](#))

Brand Names: US Enbrel; Enbrel SureClick

Brand Names: Canada Enbrel

Warning

- Very bad and sometimes deadly infections have happened in patients who take this drug. Most people who had these infections were taking other drugs to lower the immune system like methotrexate or steroid drugs. If you have any infection, are taking antibiotics now or in the recent past, or have had many infections, talk with your doctor.
- TB (tuberculosis) has been seen in patients started on this drug. These patients were exposed to TB in the past, but never got the infection. You will be tested to see if you have been exposed to TB before starting this drug.
- Lymphoma and other cancers have happened in people who take this drug or drugs like it. This has been deadly in some cases. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.
- It is used to treat juvenile arthritis.
- It is used to treat psoriatic arthritis.
- It is used to treat ankylosing spondylitis.
- It is used to treat plaque psoriasis.

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

- If you have an allergy to etanercept or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have an infection.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Abatacept or anakinra.
- If you are taking cyclophosphamide.
- If you are taking or will be taking another drug like this one.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

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

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you have a latex allergy, talk with your doctor.
- Hepatitis B testing may be done. A hepatitis B infection may get worse during care.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- Make sure you are up to date with all your vaccines.
- Do not get a weakened bacteria like BCG for bladder cancer while you use this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your blood sugar closely.
- This drug may cause or make heart failure worse. Talk with the doctor.
- There is a chance of skin cancer. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Harm to the nerves has rarely happened in people taking this drug. Sometimes this has led to long-lasting problems. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.
- If giving to your child, the dose of this drug may need to be changed as your child's weight changes. Have your child's weight checked often. Talk with the doctor before changing your child's dose.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.
- If you used this drug when you were pregnant, tell your baby's doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

Vials:

- Some products have benzyl alcohol. Do not give a product that has benzyl alcohol in it to a newborn. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.

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

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- 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 or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- 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.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds; coughing up blood; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; vaginal bleeding that is not normal; bruises without a reason or that get bigger; or any bleeding that is very bad or that you cannot stop.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Weakness.
- Seizures.
- Change in eyesight.
- Dizziness.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, swelling in the arms or legs.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Pale skin.
- Red scaly patches or bumps that are pus filled.

- Rash on your face or arms that gets worse in the sun.
- Night sweats.
- Weight loss.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Change in color or size of a mole.
- Very bad irritation where the shot was given.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

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:

- Irritation where the shot is given.
- Headache.
- Runny nose.
- Stuffy nose.
- Throat irritation.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- It is given as a shot into the fatty part of the skin on the top of the thigh, belly area, or upper arm.
- If you will be giving yourself the shot, your doctor or nurse will teach you how to give the shot.
- Follow how to use as you have been told by the doctor or read the package insert.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Do not shake.
- Move the site where you give the shot with each shot.
- Do not use if solution changes color.
- Throw away needles in a needle/sharp disposal box. Do not reuse needles or other items. When the box is full, follow all local rules for getting rid of it. Talk with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

Auto-injector shot:

- Leave this drug at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before using. Do not remove the cap or cover until ready to use. Do not heat this drug.
- Check the window on the auto-injector when the injection is done. If the window does not show that the dose has been given or if it looks like this drug is still injecting, call the doctor right away to find out what to do.

Prefilled syringes:

- If it makes the shot feel better, this drug can be taken out of the refrigerator 15 to 30 minutes before using. Allow to sit at room temperature without removing the cap or cover. Do not heat this drug.

Auto-injector shot and prefilled syringes:

- This product may contain small white particles. Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has large lumps, flakes, or other particles.

Vials:

- If it makes the shot feel better, this drug can be taken out of the refrigerator 15 to 30 minutes before using. Allow to sit at room temperature without removing the cap or cover. Do not heat this drug.
- Do not use if the solution is cloudy, leaking, or has particles.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you are not sure what to do if you miss a dose, call your doctor.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Auto-injector shot and prefilled syringes:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- If needed, you may store at room temperature for up to 14 days. Write down the date you take this drug out of the refrigerator. If stored at room temperature and not used within 14 days, throw this drug away.
- Do not put this drug back in the refrigerator after it has been stored at room temperature.

Vial:

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Unmixed vials may be stored at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. If stored at room temperature, do not put it back in the refrigerator.
- Use right away after mixing or you may store in a refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

All products:

- Store in original container.
- Protect from light.
- Protect from very hot or very cold temperatures.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Check with your pharmacist about how to throw out unused drugs.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Use of UpToDate is subject to the [Subscription and License Agreement](#).

Topic 12442 Version 100.0