TOFACITINIB PATIENT SAFETY INFORMATION

TARO

How This Medicine Works

Tofacitinib is a medicine that reduces the immune response in your body by interfering with the activity of an enzyme called janus kinase (JAK) that normally helps to activate the immune response. It is used to reduce the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and ulcerative colitis when other treatments do not work. To ensure your safety while taking tofacitinib, please review the information in this card carefully.

Dose

The following are the recommended doses of tofacitinib depending on your medical condition. Your doctor may adjust your dose based on your kidney or liver function, or other considerations. It is important that you do not increase your own dose of tofacitinib.

- If you have rheumatoid arthritis (RA), the recommended dose is 5mg twice a day. People with RA are also usually prescribed methotrexate.
- If you have psoriatic arthritis (PsA), the recommended dose is 5mg twice a day. People with PsA are usually also prescribed methotrexate or another conventional systemic DMARD.
- If you have ulcerative colitis (UC) the recommended dose is 10mg twice a day for the first 8 weeks, then either 5mg twice a day or 10mg twice a day thereafter. Your doctor may stop tofacitinib after 16 weeks if it is not working for you. Tofacitinib may be used with other medications for UC, including corticosteroids and aminosalicylates.

If you think you may have taken too much tofacitinib, contact your healthcare professional, hospital emergency department or local poison control centre, even if you have no symptoms.

If you miss a dose of tofacitinib, take the next dose at the next scheduled time. Do not double the dose to make up for a missed dose.

Warnings

Before taking tofacitinib, and while taking it, tell your doctor or healthcare professional if you have any of the following conditions or problems:

- Signs of an infection (*fever, sweating, or chills; muscle aches; cough; shortness of breath; blood in spit; weight loss; warm, red, or painful skin or sores on body; diarrhea or stomach pain; burning when urinating or urinating more often than usual; feeling very tired*), being treated for an infection, get infections frequently or have infections that come back frequently
- Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, weak immune system
- Tuberculosis, history of tuberculosis, or have been in close contact with a person with tuberculosis
- Have previously had, or currently have, hepatitis B or C
- Tears in the stomach or intestines (perforations)
- Known narrowing or blockage of the digestive tract
- Diverticulitis (swelling in the large intestine)
- Ulcers in the stomach or intestines
- Low blood cell counts (decrease in neutrophil counts and neutropenia, decrease in lymphocyte counts and lymphopenia, decrease in hemoglobin levels and anemia)
- High cholesterol levels
- Have previously had, or currently have, any type of cancer
- Liver problems (elevation in liver enzyme [transaminase] levels; have had liver damage caused by drugs; have mild, moderate, or severe liver impairment)
- Kidney problems (serum creatinine level increases, have moderate or severe kidney impairment)
- Have had interstitial lung disease
- Muscle pain or weakness

Warnings, continued

- Chest pain, heart failure, or any heart problems
- Develop new skin lesions during or after therapy or if skin lesions change appearance
- Have had blood clots in the legs or lungs or you are at risk of these clots
- Clotting problems (e.g., thrombophilia)
- If you are receiving a vaccine or have received any vaccine within one month of starting tofacitinib
- You are pregnant or planning to become pregnant

Before taking tofacitinib, ensure that your vaccines are up-to-date. Some vaccines should not be given when taking tofacitinib, so it is important to have all routine recommended immunizations (such as shingles, pneumococcal vaccines) prior to starting this medicine.

Before or while taking tofacitinib tell your doctor if you have narrowing or blockage of your digestive tract (i.e., your intestines or other part of your bowel are not as wide as normal).

Avoid pregnancy while taking tofacitinib and for four to six weeks after stopping it. If you are planning to become **pregnant**, use an effective method of birth control while taking tofacitinib and for four to six weeks after stopping this medicine.

While taking tofacitinib, note that some serious side effects can occur. Tofacitinib affects the immune system, and it can make it more difficult for your body to fight infections caused by bacteria, fungi, or viruses that can spread throughout the body. Some **infections** can lead to hospitalization or death. Do not use this medicine if you have any kind of infection.

Tofacitinib may increase the risk of **lymphoma** (cancer of the lymphocytes, the cells involved in fighting infections) and other types of cancers.

Tofacitinib can also cause **blood clots** in your arteries or veins in your legs, arms, or lungs. These clots can be serious and life-threatening and may cause death.

Your healthcare provider will check the following when you start taking tofacitinib:

- White and red blood cell counts
- Cholesterol levels
- Kidney function (creatinine level in the blood)
- Liver function (liver enzyme levels known as transaminases in the blood)

Side Effects

You may experience side effects when taking tofacitinib. If any side effects are severe, let your doctor or pharmacist know. The side effects that are most likely to occur include: upper respiratory tract infection (i.e., cold symptoms such as runny or stuffy nose, cough), headache, diarrhea, nausea, heartburn or upset stomach, dizziness, vomiting, back pain, joint pain, rash, and muscle weakness or pain. People who are 65 years of age and over and those of Asian descent may be at increased risk of serious side effects of tofacitinib.

Interactions

It is important to let your healthcare provider know all of the medications that you are taking. Certain medications can cause the levels of tofacitinib in your blood to increase or decrease and/or can increase your risk of side effects if taken together with tofacitinib. Let your healthcare provider know if you are taking any of the following:

- Biologics (e.g., Enbrel®, Humira®, Remicade®)
- Medications that lower your immune functioning (e.g., azathioprine, 6-mercaptopurine, tacrolimus, sirolimus, cyclosporine)
- Certain heart medications (antiarrhythmic drugs, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, digoxin)
- Cholinesterase inhibitors (for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias)
- HIV medications
- Antifungal medications (rifampin, ketoconazole, fluconazole)
- Had any vaccines within one month before starting tofacitinib
- St. John's wort

When taking tofacitinib, avoid consuming grapefruit juice.

When to Seek Medical Attention

It is important to talk with your healthcare professional if you experience any of the following when taking tofacitinib:

Common

- Signs of an infection, such as pneumonia (cough, fever, fatigue), urinary tract infection (pain or burning on urination, cloudy urine, difficulty urinating or increased need to urinate, pain in pelvis or mid-back), cellulitis (redness, swelling, and painful skin).
- High blood pressure.
- Abdominal pain, loss of appetite (gastritis).

Uncommon

- The flu (cough, sore throat, fever, chills).
- Signs of bronchitis, including cough that persists, fatigue, and shortness of breath.
- Changes in kidney function that may include changes in the amount or colour of urine or frequency of urination.
- Fatigue, loss of energy, weakness, or shortness of breath. This might be due to low blood cell counts or low hemoglobin levels (anemia, neutropenia, or lymphopenia).
- Unusual new or changing skin lesions or patches, which can be a sign of nonmelanoma skin cancer.
- Swelling of the legs and ankles or the arms and hands (peripheral edema).
- Stomach symptoms such as stomach pain and loss of appetite.
- Increase in blood pressure.
- Muscle weakness and/or muscle pain, which may be a sign of an increase in an enzyme called creatine phosphokinase.
- Muscle swelling or weak or sore muscles and dark urine (brown, red, tea-coloured), which may be a sign of a serious muscle injury called rhabdomyolysis.
- Signs of a certain type of cancer called lymphoma, including swelling of lymph nodes (in neck, underarm, groin, stomach), fever, fatigue, weight loss, skin rash or itching, feeling of fullness in stomach, unexplained pains (chest, stomach, bones).

Stop taking tofacitinib and get medical attention if you experience any of the following when taking this medicine:

Common

- Shingles (skin rash or blisters usually on one side of the body with itching, burning, or tingling pain).

Uncommon

- Signs or symptoms of a **blood clot** in your leg (swelling, pain, or tenderness in the leg) or in your lungs (sudden chest pain, shortness of breath).
- Cold skin, lack of pulse, tingling, numbness, pain, spasm, paleness, and weakness of the arm or leg, which may be signs of a **clot in a blood vessel called an artery**.
- Signs of **liver problems** including yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes, darker urine, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, or itching.
- Signs of **heart failure**, including shortness of breath when you exert yourself or when you lay down; swelling in your legs, ankles, or feet; irregular heartbeat; or cough that persists.
- An **allergic reaction**, with symptoms including hives; rash; swelling of the face, lips, or tongue; swelling of the throat that causes wheezing; difficulty swallowing; or difficulty breathing.

Reference: Taro Pharmaceuticals Inc. Taro-Tofacitinib Product Monograph. Revised July 2022. https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00068405.PDF. Accessed April 20, 2023.