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Ustekinumab (Stelara)

Ustekinumab (Stelara) is a biologic medication used to lower inflammation and help patients with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and moderate to severe Cohn's Disease. This medicine is prescribed after non-responding to other medications. It is taken as a home injection. Ustekinumab blocks inflammation proteins called IL-12 and IL-23. Ustekinumab is a biologic medication and can take several months to start working. Biologics are also often taken long term.



How to Take It

After the initial Ustekinumab injection, a second injection is given 4 weeks later. Then, an injection is given every 12 weeks. The dose for patients weighing less than 100kg (220lbs) is 45mg, and the dose for patients weighing more than 100kg is 90mg. A screening test for tuberculosis will be needed before starting this medication to reduce risk of infection. You should follow up with your doctor regularly while on this medication.

Side Effects

Ustekinumab lowers your immune system and can lead to infections. Ustekinumab rarely can lead to nervous system condition called reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS), which is reversible if the medication is stopped. Some people can get a reaction at the injection site, such as itching, swelling, and redness.

Tell Your Doctor

If you develop symptoms of an infection, such as a fever or cough, you should contact your doctor. If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy, let your doctor know before starting this medication; ustekinumab has not been studied in pregnant or breastfeeding women. Be sure to talk with your doctor before receiving any vaccines

or undergoing any surgeries while taking this medication. Live vaccines should be avoided while on this medication. Tell your doctor right away if you have any new or worsening medical problems including: changes to your mental status, vision problems, seizures, or severe headaches.

Written March 2017 by Suleman Bhana, MD and reviewed by the American College of Rheumatology Communications and Marketing Committee.

This information is provided for general education only. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for professional medical advice, diagnosis and treatment of a medical or health condition.

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