

Package leaflet: Information for the user

Benlysta 120 mgpowder for concentrate
for solution for infusion**Benlysta 400 mg**powder for concentrate
for solution for infusion

belimumab

▼ This medicine is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. You can help by reporting any side effects you may get. See the end of section 4 for how to report side effects.

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start using this medicine because it contains important information for you.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

Benlysta as an infusion is a medicine used to treat lupus (systemic lupus erythematosus, SLE) in adults and children (5 years of age and older) whose disease is still highly active despite standard treatment. Benlysta is also used in combination with other medicines to treat adults (18 years of age and older) with active lupus nephritis (lupus-related kidney inflammation). Lupus is a disease in which the immune system (the system that fights infection) attacks your own cells and tissues, causing inflammation and organ damage. It can affect almost any organ in the body, and is thought to involve a type of white blood cells called B cells.

Benlysta contains belimumab (a monoclonal antibody). It reduces the number of B cells in your blood by blocking the action of BLyS, a protein that helps B cells to live longer and is found in high levels in people with lupus.

You will be given Benlysta as well as your usual treatment for lupus.

Depression and suicide

There have been reports of depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts including suicide during treatment with Benlysta. Tell your doctor if you have a history of these conditions. If you experience new or worsening symptoms at any time:

- Contact your doctor or go to a hospital straight away.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

Contraception in women of childbearing potential

- Use an effective method of contraception while you are being treated with Benlysta and for at least 4 months after the last dose.

If you feel depressed or have thoughts of harming yourself or committing suicide, you may find it helpful to tell a relative or close friend and ask them to read this leaflet. You might ask them to tell you if they are worried about changes in your mood or behaviour.

Medicine given before an infusion

Your doctor may decide to give you medicines which help to reduce any infusion reactions before you are given Benlysta. These may include a type of medicine called an anti-histamine and a medicine to prevent a high

temperature. You will be checked closely and if you do have any reactions these will be treated.

Severe skin reactions

Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis have been reported in association with Benlysta treatment.

- Stop using Benlysta and seek medical attention immediately if you notice any of the symptoms described in section 6.

Check with your doctor if this may apply to you.

Look out for important symptoms

People taking medicines that affect their immune system may be more at risk of infections, including a rare but serious brain infection called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML).

- Read the information 'Increased risk of brain infection' in section 4 of this leaflet.

To improve the traceability of this medicine, your healthcare provider should record the Benlysta lot number in your patient file. You may also wish to make a note of this information in case you are asked for it in the future.

Important information about the contents of Benlysta

This medicine contains less than 1 mmol sodium (23 mg) per dose, so it is essentially sodium-free.

3 How Benlysta is used

A nurse or doctor will give you Benlysta through a drip in your vein (intravenous infusion) over one hour.

Adults and children (5 years of age and older)

Your doctor will decide on the correct dose depending on your body weight. The recommended dose is 10 mg for each kilogram (kg) of your body weight.

You are usually given Benlysta on the first day of treatment then again 14 and 28 days later. After this, Benlysta is usually given once every 4 weeks.

Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the Emergency department of your nearest hospital, if you get any of the following symptoms of an allergic or infusion reaction:

- swelling of the face, lips, mouth or tongue
- wheezing, difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
- rash
- itchy raised bumps or hives.

What is in this leaflet

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

What Benlysta is and what it is used for

1 What Benlysta is and what it is used for

2 What you need to know before you are given Benlysta

3 Do not receive Benlysta

4 Possible side effects

5 How to store Benlysta

6 Contents of the pack and other information

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