

Patient information factsheet

Reducing the waste of biological therapies (anti-TNF medication)

Your biological therapy costs approximately £950 per month, please avoid wasting any. The advice below will help you reduce any waste.

How to manage the supply of your medication

Your injections are delivered by a homecare company (either Healthcare at Home or Medco).

Deliveries are now monthly to help reduce waste, but you can help manage the deliveries too:

- do not overstock your injections - the homecare company may monitor your stock levels
- do not accept a delivery of stock you do not need
- contact the homecare company if you have excess stock, so they can delay the next delivery
- contact the homecare company if your medication has been changed or stopped, to avoid delivery of medication that is not needed
- contact the homecare company and the rheumatology department if your medication has been stopped temporarily (for example if you have an infection).

How to store your injections

Always keep your injections in a functioning fridge at a temperature between 2 to 8°C. If you want to be sure about the temperature of your fridge you can buy a small fridge thermometer. These can cost as little as £2 or £3.

Keep your injections in their original packaging and if possible, store them in a plastic container (such as an old ice cream box) to prevent them becoming damp or contaminated.

Do not allow your injections to become frozen. You can avoid this by not storing them next to the freezer compartment or in an area overstocked with food.

If you have concerns about how your injections have been stored, or you think they may have frozen, always contact the rheumatology department or pharmacist for advice before using them. Please do not throw them away unless instructed to.

Faulty injection pens/syringes

If your injection pen or syringe is faulty, discoloured, cloudy or has flakes or particles in, do not use it but please do not throw the pen or syringe away. Contact the homecare company and they will send you a bag to return it to them in. They will also send you a replacement.

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Power-cuts and fridge break downs

Do not remove your injections from the fridge if there is a power-cut. Avoid opening the fridge door. A standard domestic fridge will keep cold for about two to four hours if it is not opened.

If the power comes back on within two to four hours and your injections still feel cool to the touch, you can use them as normal. If you are uncertain contact the rheumatology department, pharmacist or nurse for advice.

You may still be able to use your injections even if the power has, or may have been, off for longer than four hours, for example if there's a power-cut overnight. Do not remove them from the fridge or throw them away. Contact the rheumatology or pharmacy department or pharmacist for advice.

If your fridge has broken down or the power is likely to be off for a long time arrange for your injections to be kept cold. If this is not possible please contact the pharmacy department, rheumatology department or pharmacist immediately (see contact numbers below).

If your treatment is discontinued

If your treatment is discontinued you must contact the homecare company so they can stop further deliveries. Please continue to store any unused medication in your fridge and return it to the rheumatology department at your next visit.

Training

If you would like further training on using your injection pen or syringe contact the homecare company or the rheumatology department.

Change of contact details

If you change your address or telephone number you must contact the homecare company and hospital appointments department (023 8079 6073) and tell them the new details.

Useful telephone numbers

Homecare companies:

- Healthcare at Home 0800 917 6853
- Medco 01604 241120

Hospital contacts:

- Rheumatology clinical nurse specialists: 023 8079 5352
- Pharmacy department: 023 8079 4161 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday; 9am to 12 noon, Saturday and Sunday)
- Pharmacist, Caron Underhill: 023 8077 7222 and ask for bleep 2407.

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If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.