

## What do I need to know about Belimumab?

(say “be-LIM-yoo-mab”)

Other names for this medicine include: BENLYSTA®

Medicine is one of the tools your doctor has to treat your lupus. Taking medicine as your doctor suggests will improve your lupus and may prevent more serious health problems in the future. If you don't take your medicines correctly, you may be putting your health, and perhaps your life, at risk.

## Why am I taking this medicine?

This medicine can help control your serious lupus symptoms so you feel better. And it helps to prevent flares. Belimumab works to help stop your immune system from attacking your joints and other parts of your body.

## How do I take this medicine?

- You give this medicine to yourself at home as a shot (injection) into the skin.
- You will be taking \_\_\_\_\_mg once per week.

## How fast does it work?

You will slowly start to feel better. It takes about 6 months to make a big difference in how you feel.

## I'm feeling better. Can I stop taking my medicine?

No, even if you're feeling better, keep taking your medicine. Do not stop unless your doctor says it's O.K. to stop. You may need to take it for quite a while until your lupus is very well controlled.

## Are there any side effects?

Side effects are unplanned symptoms (signs) or feelings you have when taking a medicine. Some side effects happen just when you start taking a medicine. Some happen only once in a while.

**IMPORTANT**

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (watery poop)
- Fever or chills
- Infection (pain or burning when peeing; peeing often; coughing up mucus; having warm, red, or painful skin; having sores on your body)
- Headaches
- Changes in your mood

Most side effects are not serious and go away on their own. Others can be more bothersome and even serious. Keep track of side effects. **Tell your doctor right away about any unexpected signs or changes in the way you feel.**

- As with any medicine, there's a small chance you may be allergic to it. Call your doctor right away if you have a rash and itching.
- Call 911 if you have trouble breathing, if your mouth or face swell up, if your throat feels tight, or if you feel dizzy.
- You should not take this medicine if you have an infection. Signs of infection include: fever or chills; pain or burning when peeing or peeing often; coughing up mucus; having warm, red, or painful skin; having sores on your body.
- Before getting this medicine, talk with your doctor if you think you might have an infection.
- Let your doctor know right away if you have any mood changes such as depression or anxiety.

### **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this medicine?**

- Tell your doctor about all medicines you use. This includes prescriptions, medicines you buy off the shelf at the store, vitamins, and herbal products. Do not start a new medicine without telling your doctor.
- It's important to know that many medicines do not mix well with alcohol.
- Talk to your doctor before getting any shots. Some shots are not good for you while you are taking this medicine.
- Talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or if you're thinking of getting pregnant. The medicine can harm the unborn baby. Talk with your doctor before getting pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you are breastfeeding.

### **What follow-up do I need?**

Keep your regular appointments with your doctor. Keep your regular appointments for your blood tests. The blood tests help your doctor check for side effects from the medicine.

### **What's the doctor's phone number? (585) 486-0901**