

Treatment

# Ocrevus<sup>®</sup> (ocrelizumab)

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There is a range of disease-modifying therapies approved for people living with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis in Australia. These therapies, also called immunotherapies, work to reduce disease activity in the central nervous system and reduce the frequency and severity of relapses in people living with multiple sclerosis.

## What is Ocrevus® and how does it work?

The active ingredient of Ocrevus® is ocrelizumab. It is used for the treatment of patients with relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis to delay the progression of physical disability and to reduce the frequency of relapse. Ocrevus® is also indicated for the treatment of patients living with primary progressive multiple sclerosis to delay the progression of physical disability.

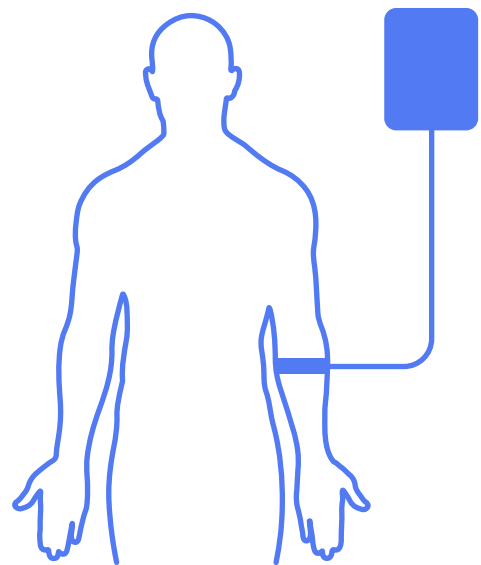
In multiple sclerosis, the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective layer (myelin) around the nerve cells. This causes inflammation and damage which stops the nervous system working properly. Ocrevus® works on the immune system to reduce the inflammation and attacks on the nervous system.

## How is Ocrevus® administered?

Ocrevus® is infused intravenously (IV – into a vein) at a hospital or clinic i.e. as an outpatient (which will take a few hours). A doctor or nurse or other qualified health professional will monitor you before, during and after your infusion.

The first infusion is 300mg of Ocrevus® by IV infusion over about 2.5 hours. The second infusion of 300mg of Ocrevus® by IV infusion will be given two weeks after the first infusion.

Subsequent infusions of 600mg of Ocrevus® will be given six months after the previous infusion.



**300** — **2** → **300** — **6** → **600**  
milligrams      weeks      milligrams      months      milligrams

# What are the possible side effects of Ocrevus®?

Ocrevus® helps most people living with multiple sclerosis, but it may have unwanted side effects in some people. You may not experience any of them. Tell your doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

Side effects of Ocrevus® may include infusion related reactions. Tell your doctor or nurse immediately if you notice any of the following while receiving an infusion: swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat or other parts of the body, shortness of breath, rash, itching or hives, feeling sick (nausea), fever, cough, tiredness, headaches and dizziness, fast heartbeat. Patients should tell their doctor immediately or go to Emergency at their nearest hospital if they have any signs or symptoms of an infusion reaction or allergic reaction.

Clinical trials indicated that there may also be a slightly higher risk of some common viral infections such as the common cold.

Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) is a rare, life threatening brain infection caused by the John Cunningham virus (JC virus), which manifests in people whose immune system has been suppressed. Although there were no cases of PML associated with Ocrevus® use in clinical trials, PML has been associated with other immunosuppressive medications for multiple sclerosis. Some of the symptoms of PML are similar to multiple sclerosis.

Your neurologist will assist you to assess the risks and the expected benefit of treatment with Ocrevus® prior to starting therapy and over the course of treatment.

If you are currently pregnant, trying to become pregnant or breastfeeding, please discuss your individual circumstances and treatment options with your neurologist or healthcare team.

The safety and effectiveness of Ocrevus® for people aged under 18 has not been established.

# How much does Ocrevus® cost?

Ocrevus® has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting MS and also for the treatment of patients with primary progressive MS. As Ocrevus® has specific patient management requirements, only neurologists are able to initiate treatment. Your neurologist will need to obtain a special authority to prescribe you with the medication. There are a number of criteria you are required to meet before your neurologist obtains authority to write this prescription.

For details of the criteria required to receive a prescription for Ocrevus® treatment through the PBS, please visit the official PBS website at: <https://www.pbs.gov.au/medicine/item/11237K-11242Q> You will need to click on the red **Authority Required (STREAMLINED)** link.

If you are eligible for medications through the PBS, you will need to pay a contribution fee each time your prescription is dispensed. The Federal Government

pays for the remaining cost. The amount of the contribution fee depends upon whether or not you have a pension or concession card. The amount of this fee is set each year by the Federal Government. Further information about the PBS, your entitlements and details regarding the PBS safety net (which protects patients and their families requiring a large number of PBS items) is available through the Medicare Australia website at: [www.medicare.gov.au](http://www.medicare.gov.au) Ocrevus® is currently not available on the PBS for people with primary progressive MS. Ocrevus® will be available for people with primary progressive MS to purchase privately.

If you are not eligible for Ocrevus® through the PBS, for example if you are a visitor from overseas, your neurologist may write a private prescription. In this instance you will have to pay the full cost to the pharmacy that dispenses your medication. You will need to request a quote from your pharmacist for the price of any medication which is not subsidised by the PBS.

# General information

Generally, the hospital or clinic where you have your Ocrevus® infused will arrange your prescription and order the medication for you.

**In Australia, Ocrevus® is supplied by:**

Roche Products Pty Ltd  
Level 8, 30-34 Hickson Road  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Phone: 02 9454 9582 or 1800 233 950

# For more information on multiple sclerosis and other multiple sclerosis treatments

- Speak to your neurologist about what treatment best suits your individual circumstances.
- MS nurses can also provide information, training and ongoing support in managing your immunotherapy.
- We can provide emotional and practical support for every stage of your journey. For more information visit [www.msplus.org.au](http://www.msplus.org.au)
- For more information about multiple sclerosis treatments, research, clinical trials and for your state MS organisation visit [www.msaustralia.org.au](http://www.msaustralia.org.au)

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## References

1. Ocrevus® Approved Product Information, July 2017  
[www.ebs.tga.gov.au/ebs/picmi/picmirepository.nsf/pdf?OpenAgent&id=CP-2017-CMI-02092-1](http://www.ebs.tga.gov.au/ebs/picmi/picmirepository.nsf/pdf?OpenAgent&id=CP-2017-CMI-02092-1)

## Note

MS Plus does not recommend any specific disease-modifying treatment for people living with multiple sclerosis. Decisions about any treatments, taking into consideration the potential benefits and side effects for each individual's circumstances, should be made in careful consultation with the person's neurologist.

The information supplied in this document is collated from material provided by the relevant pharmaceutical company and MS Australia.