

Treatment

Rebif® (interferon beta-1a (rch))

- What is Rebif® and how does it work?
- How is Rebif® administered?
- What are the potential side effects of Rebif® treatment?
- How much does Rebif® cost?
- General information
- For more information on multiple sclerosis and other multiple sclerosis treatments

There is a range of disease-modifying therapies approved for people living with 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 Rebif® and how does it work?

The active ingredient of Rebif® is interferon beta-1a (rch). Interferons are proteins produced naturally in the human body to help fight infections and regulate the immune system. Beta interferons have been shown to slow down activity and disease progression

in multiple sclerosis. They do this by helping regulate the immune system, reducing attacks on myelin. In clinical trials¹ Rebif® (interferon beta-1a (rch)) significantly decreased the frequency of MS relapses and slowed down the accrual of disability.

How is Rebif® administered?

Rebif® is taken three times a week (e.g. Monday, Wednesday and Friday) by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection. You receive a month's supply which consists of 12 injections.

You can choose from four different delivery devices for Rebif®:

- 1 RebiSmart® – an electronic auto-injection device with multi-dose cartridge
- 2 RebiSlide® – a manual auto-injector with multi-dose cartridge
- 3 RebiDose® – a pre-filled, single use disposable auto-injection device
- 4 RebiJect® – a pre-filled syringe with auto injection device

For assistance and training on how to use the delivery devices please contact Merck Medical Information on 1800 073 243 Monday to Friday between 9am to 5pm, or speak with your MS nurse.



What are the potential side effects of Rebif® treatment?

Rebif® helps most people living with multiple sclerosis, but it may have side effects in some people.

Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you: injection site reactions including redness, swelling, bruising, pain; flu-like symptoms including fever, chills, and muscular pain, headache or fatigue, itching or rash, abdominal pain, diarrhea

or nausea, muscle pain or aches, back pain or painful joints, muscle stiffness or spasms, weakness, difficulty walking and increased sweating.

Other side effects may also occur in some patients – tell your doctor if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell.

How much does Rebif® cost?

Rebif® is currently used for the treatment of Australians living with relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS), including clinically isolated syndrome, relapsing-remitting disease and active secondary progressive disease.

From 1 December 2022, Rebif® will no longer be available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for Australians living with MS. This includes all available presentations of Rebif® including the interferon beta-1a single dose autoinjector, single dose pre-filled syringe and multidose cartridge.

The removal of Rebif® from the PBS means people with MS will no longer be able to start treatment with this product, from 1 December 2022.

However, for people with MS who are currently being treated with Rebif®, it is important to note that while the therapy will be removed from the PBS from 1 December 2022, Rebif® scripts will still be filled until 1 April 2023. Your neurologist will need to obtain an authority to prescribe the medication for you.

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

General information

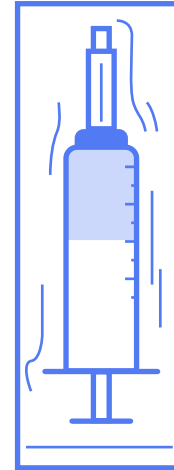
Most pharmacies do not keep Rebif® in stock. They will place an order with the manufacturer to have stock delivered to the pharmacy especially for you. It is therefore important to let your pharmacist know a few days before you need the medication.

Rebif® should be stored at 2–8°C in the original packing to protect it from light. Should refrigeration be temporarily unavailable, Rebif can be stored at 25°C for up to 14 days, then put back in the refrigerator and used before the expiry date.

In Australia, Rebif® is manufactured by:

Merck Serono Australia Pty Ltd
Unit 3-4, 25 Frenchs Forest Road
Frenchs Forest NSW 2086

Merck has a toll free Medical Information and Customer Service line: 1800 073 243 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

**2–8°C**

Storage temperature

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
- For more information about multiple sclerosis treatments, research, clinical trials and for your state MS organisation visit www.msaustralia.org.au

References

1. Rebif® Approved Product Information, February 2016.
www.ebs.tga.gov.au/ebs/picmi/picmirepository.nsf/pdf?OpenAgent&id=CP-2010-PI-07443-3

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.