

Treatment

Teriflunomide

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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 Teriflunomide and how does it work?

Teriflunomide is an immunomodulatory agent with anti-inflammatory properties. Teriflunomide, previously known to the Australian community as Aubagio® is now a generic medication and is produced by several manufacturers. A generic medication contains the same active ingredient as the original medication.

In multiple sclerosis, certain types of white blood cells (called lymphocytes) play a role in destroying myelin, the protective sheath that surrounds nerve fibres and helps with the efficient flow of nerve signals or messages to and from the brain and various parts of the body.

Teriflunomide blocks the action of specific enzymes in the body so that these lymphocytes are stopped from dividing.

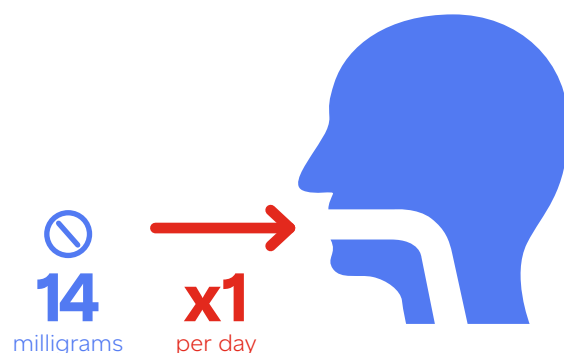
This is thought to reduce the number of lymphocytes and interfere with their ability to produce the disease response and nerve damage that ultimately leads to relapses.

In clinical trials¹ Teriflunomide has been shown to:

- reduce the frequency of relapses.²
- delay progression of physical disability.³

How is Teriflunomide administered?

Teriflunomide is a film-coated oral tablet. The usual dose for this medicine is one 14mg tablet per day. You receive a month's supply, which consists of 28 tablets. It can be taken either with or without food.



What are the potential side effects of Teriflunomide treatment?

Teriflunomide helps most people living with multiple sclerosis, but it may have side effects in some people. The most frequent side effects of Teriflunomide in clinical trials and post-marketing experience included nausea, elevated liver enzymes, diarrhoea and hair thinning. Less frequent effects include increased blood pressure and skin disorders. On rare occasions, some people may develop liver or blood problems, gastrointestinal disorders, severe skin reactions and hypersensitivity reactions.

Animal studies indicate that Teriflunomide may increase the risk of birth defects. Teriflunomide should not be taken by women who are pregnant or breast-feeding. Women of childbearing potential must use reliable and effective contraception while taking Teriflunomide.

Your doctor or pharmacist can provide comprehensive information on the use of Teriflunomide, including precautions and side effects.

How much does Teriflunomide cost?

Teriflunomide has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and is available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Please discuss with your neurologist whether Teriflunomide is the right treatment for you. Your neurologist will need to obtain an authority to prescribe the medication for you.

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

If you are not eligible for Teriflunomide 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

Not all pharmacies keep Teriflunomide in stock. It is therefore important to let your pharmacist know a few days before you need this medication so that they can order it in for you.

Call 1800 222 121, or speak to your neurologist or MS nurse for further information.

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. Teriflunomide Approved Product Information, December 2016 www.ebs.tga.gov.au/ebs/picmi/picmirepository.nsf/pdf?OpenAgent&id=CP-2012-PI-02971-1
2. O'Connor PW, Li D, Freedman MS et al. A Phase II study of the safety and efficacy of teriflunomide in multiple sclerosis with relapses. *Neurol* 2006;66:894-900
3. O'Connor P, Wolinsky JS, Confavreux C et al. Randomized trial of oral teriflunomide for relapsing multiple sclerosis *NEJM* 2011; 365: 1293-303

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.