

Treatment

# Tysabri<sup>®</sup> (natalizumab)

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There is a range of disease-modifying therapies approved for people with MS 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 with MS.

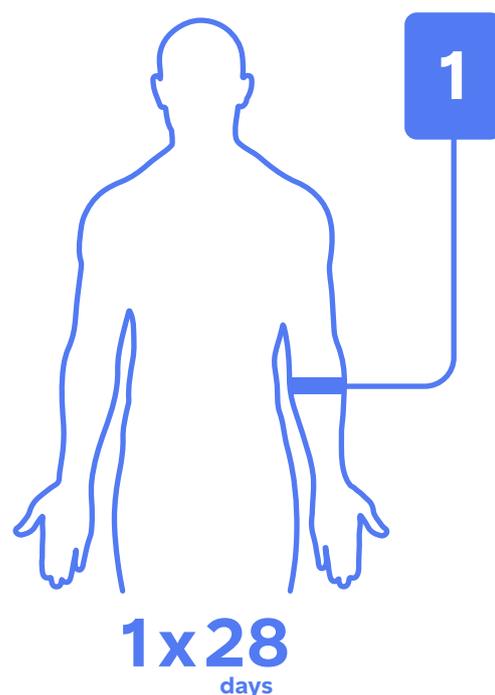
## What is Tysabri® and how does it work?

The active ingredient of Tysabri® is natalizumab. Natalizumab is a humanised monoclonal antibody which locks onto certain immune cells, called T-cells. Once the natalizumab is attached to the T-cells, they cannot cross the blood brain barrier to attack the myelin or nerves. Natalizumab belongs to a family of medications called selective adhesion molecule inhibitors.

Clinical trials<sup>1</sup> found that Tysabri® has a significant beneficial effect in people with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS) by reducing the accumulation of permanent physical disability, exacerbation frequency and disease activity measured by gadolinium-enhanced lesions on brain magnetic resonance images (MRI).

## How is Tysabri® administered?

Tysabri® is infused intravenously (into a vein) once every 28 days usually at a hospital i.e. as an outpatient (which may take a few hours). A nurse or other qualified health professional will monitor you before, during and after your infusion.



# What are the possible side effects of Tysabri?

Tysabri® helps most people with MS, but may have side effects in some people. All medications have side effects. It is important to notify your health professional if you experience any side effects or are feeling unwell.

Common side effects of Tysabri® include urinary tract infections, sore throat, runny or blocked nose, headaches, dizziness, shivering, rash (hives), nausea, vomiting, joint pain, tiredness and fever.

A condition called Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) has been associated with taking Tysabri®. PML is a life-threatening brain infection caused by the John Cunningham (JC) virus which manifests in people whose immune system

has been suppressed. PML has also been associated with other immunosuppressive medications for MS. Your MS healthcare team will carefully monitor you for this condition with regular blood tests for JC virus antibodies and MRI scans.

Your neurologist will assist you to assess the risks and the expected benefit of treatment with Tysabri® prior to starting therapy and over the course of treatment. Your health professional can provide comprehensive information on the use of Tysabri®, including precautions and side effects.

Women who are pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding should seek advice from their doctor.

# How much does Tysabri® cost?

Tysabri® has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting MS and is available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Your neurologist will need to obtain an authority to prescribe the medication for you.

For details of the criteria required to receive a prescription for Tysabri® treatment through the PBS, please visit the official PBS website at: <http://www.pbs.gov.au/medicine/item/9505G-9624M>

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.

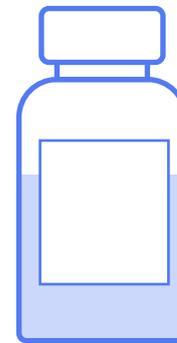
Further information about the PBS, your entitlements and details regarding the PBS safety net (which protects patients and their families requiring a large number of PBS items) is available through the Medicare Australia website at: [www.medicare.gov.au](http://www.medicare.gov.au)

If you are not eligible for Tysabri® 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 clinic where you have your Tysabri® infused will take care of your prescription and order the medication for you. If you do need to get Tysabri® dispensed at your local pharmacy please remember they will need to place an order and have stock delivered especially for you. It is therefore important to give your pharmacist notice to organise the medication.

Tysabri® needs to be kept between 2-8°C. If the outside temperature is warm, it is a good idea to take your medication home in an ice cooler. Your pharmacist may be able to assist with this.

**2-8°C**Storage  
temperature**In Australia, Tysabri® is supplied by:**

Biogen Australia Pty Ltd  
Level 3, 123 Epping Road  
North Ryde NSW 2113  
Phone: 02 8875 3900

# 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)

**References**

1. Tysabri® Consumer Medicine Information, April 2019  
<http://www.pbs.gov.au/pbs/home> (search for natalizumab)  
or visit: <https://bit.ly/2Pglivc>

**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.