

## Patient information

# Janus Kinase inhibitor (JAK) in the treatment of rheumatic disease

### How should I take my JAK medicine?

There are several JAK inhibitor medications including Baracitinib, Tofacitinib, Upadacitinib and Fligotonib. Your rheumatology nurse will discuss which JAK medicine is best for you. The rheumatology nurse will also discuss how to take your medicine, which is usually one tablet once or twice a day. The dose is usually lower if you are aged 75 years or over

*Please note: The name of your medication may change, as other companies may produce a version of this medicine, which is called a 'biosimilar'. Biosimilar medications meet the same quality and efficacy as the original drug and have been available to patients for over 10 years.*

### How often should I have blood tests?

- You will need to have your usual blood tests initially every two weeks for three occasions, then every three months thereafter.
- You will also need to have a lipid profile blood test (a cholesterol blood test) three months after starting you JAK medication. You do not need to fast for this blood test.
- The rheumatology department will supply you with a master copy blood form, which can be photocopied.
- You can have these blood tests at your local health centre or at the West Suffolk Hospital, whichever is most convenient.
- Please remember that West Suffolk Hospital blood test department no longer accepts a walk-in service, you will need to book in advance by calling telephone

number: **0300 303 5299** or online [www.swiftqueue.co.uk](http://www.swiftqueue.co.uk) or via the WSH internet page: [www.wsh.nhs.uk/bloodtests](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk/bloodtests).

- West Suffolk Hospital blood test department is open **7.15am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday and 8.15am to 12.00noon on Saturdays.**

## **What is important about the JAK medicines?**

- Your nurse will give you an alert card which you should carry on your person.
- Shingles is a possible side effect of JAK medication. If you have any symptoms of shingles (a painful skin rash with blisters) then you should contact your GP urgently as you may need anti-viral medication. If this should occur, you should also suspend your JAK medication for two weeks.
- Although uncommon, there have been some cases of blood clots (deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolus) on patients taking JAK medication. You should contact your GP if you develop a pain and swelling in your calf or unusual shortness of breath.

## **How do I get repeat prescriptions?**

- The tablets are delivered to you at home via a home care company.
- The home care company will be in contact with you to arrange your repeat deliveries.
- Please contact the home care company for issues relating to the delivery of your medicine. Please do not contact the rheumatology department

## **What happens next?**

- The JAK medications are generally well tolerated however if you develop any side effects, you should contact the **Rheumatology nurses on 01284 713707** for further advice.
- The annual 'flu' vaccine, pneumonia vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine are recommended. You do not need to suspend your JAK medication when you have these vaccinations.

- You will need to contact the Rheumatology Nurses after your first delivery in order to ensure a follow-up appointment has been booked appropriately.
- You will be seen in clinic to review your progress three months after you have started your JAK medicine.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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