

Rituximab (MES)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact: Medical Elective Service (MES)
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE.
Telephone 01904 721062 or email yhs-tr.MES.PatientEnquiries@nhs.net

Information about Rituximab

Rituximab is a drug given by Intravenous Infusion. It is used to treat Rheumatoid Arthritis or Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis that has not improved after treatment with other medications.

Rituximab is an immunosuppressant medication. It works by targeting inflammation, reducing the over activity in your immune system.

Information about your infusion

Rituximab is usually given in two doses two weeks apart.

Prior to your first appointment you are required to have a blood sample taken using a blood form provided to you with your appointment letter. You will need to have this blood sample taken two to seven days prior to your appointment.

Rituximab may cause a temporary drop in your blood pressure, so if you take any blood pressure medications you will need to stop these 12 hours before your appointment. If you are in any doubt about your medications do not take them, but bring your medication with you to your appointment and the nurse will let you know which medications to take. You should take your blood pressure medication as normal the day after your infusion.

The day before your appointment you will need to contact the Medical Elective Service (MES) by phone to complete a health screening checklist to ensure you are well enough to be given your treatment. You will need to do this before both infusions. If you do not contact us, your appointment will have to be cancelled and rescheduled to the next available appointment.

If you are unable to use a telephone to complete this checklist you can have a carer or relative make this phone call for you if you are happy for them to do so. Otherwise please contact MES on the email address above as soon as possible so alternative arrangements can be made.

On admission to MES a member of staff will weigh you, record your observations (including blood pressure, pulse and temperature) and insert a cannula (a soft plastic tube) into a vein in your hand or arm.

One of the MES nurses will then give you an infusion of steroids through the cannula over 30 minutes. On completion of the infusion, you will be given a 50ml saline (salt solution) flush to ensure you receive the full dose of medication.

You will also be given paracetamol and antihistamine tablets, to help reduce the risk of having a reaction to the infusion. Please inform your nurse if you have taken either of these medications the morning of your infusion.

There will then be a 30-minute waiting period after the steroid infusion before your Rituximab infusion will be given.

Your Rituximab infusion will then be started by one of the nurses on MES.

Throughout your infusion, your observations will be taken at half hourly intervals and the rate of infusion of Rituximab will be altered accordingly. On completion of the infusion, you will be given a 50ml saline (salt solution) flush to ensure you receive the full dose of medication.

The Rituximab infusion will take about four and a half hours.

After your infusion is finished, you will need to remain on MES to be monitored for one hour to ensure you feel ok. A member of staff will then repeat your observations and remove your cannula.

You will be given the date and time of your next infusion and provided with a blood form, so you can have your bloods checked before your next appointment.

MES will provide hot drinks, bottled water and biscuits. We will provide sandwiches if you are with us over lunch time. You are welcome to bring any food or drink (non-alcoholic) with you to your appointment.

Possible side effects

Possible side effects that your Rituximab may cause include dizziness, headache, light-headedness, nausea and diarrhoea. This list is not exhaustive, and you should contact your doctor or specialist nurse for further information if required.

Very rarely you may experience an allergic reaction to the medication, with symptoms such as hives (itchy, raised welts), itching, swelling of the tongue, chest pain or shortness of breath.

If you experience any of these symptoms or feel unwell in any way during your infusion you should inform a member of the nursing staff immediately.

If you have any problems following your Rituximab infusion please contact your consultant or specialist nurse.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Medical Elective Service, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
or email yhs-tr.MES.PatientEnquiries@nhs.net

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供 , 電或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

Telephone: 01904 725566

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