

Medicine: tocilizumab (brand name: RoActemra®) for Giant Cell Arteritis

Roche Products Ltd

What is Giant Cell Arteritis?

Giant cell arteritis (GCA) is a rare condition where inflammation causes the arteries to become swollen and painful. It mainly affects arteries in the head and neck. This leads to symptoms including severe headaches, scalp tenderness, jaw discomfort and temporary and permanent sight loss which impact on quality of life, increase the risk of falls and reduce mobility.

How does tocilizumab work?

Tocilizumab attaches to the receptor for a protein called interleukin 6 (IL-6). IL-6 is involved in causing the inflammation and swelling in giant cell arteritis. By blocking IL-6 from attaching to its receptor tocilizumab reduces the inflammation and swelling.

What has SMC said?

SMC has accepted tocilizumab for the treatment of adult patients with Giant Cell Arteritis. Treatment may be continued for up to 12 months.



Why has SMC said this?

SMC looks at how well new medicines work compared with current treatments available in Scotland and in relation to how much they will cost to buy and administer (for example, if the medicine has to be given at a clinic or side effects have to be monitored).

SMC carefully considers every new medicine to make sure it benefits patients and is considered to be an acceptable use of the limited resources in NHSScotland. When SMC assesses a medicine it takes account of the needs of all patients in NHSScotland, not just those who may be treated with the medicine under consideration.

To do this SMC consider the following:

- Clinical trial and economic evidence from the company that makes the medicine.

- Advice from healthcare professionals about any benefits of the new medicine compared to current treatment, along with how the new medicine is likely to be used.
- Information from patient groups about the potential impact of the medicine on patients and carers.

After careful consideration, applying extra flexibility because tocilizumab is a medicine for a rare condition, and after the company applied a confidential discount to the medicine, SMC was able to accept it as a possible treatment within NHSScotland.

What does SMC's decision mean for me?

If your healthcare professional thinks that tocilizumab for use as described above is the right medicine for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS in Scotland. For further information see:

Medicines in Scotland: What's the right treatment for me?

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/medicinesbooklet.aspx



More information

The organisation below can provide more information and support for people with GCA and their families. SMC is not responsible for the content of any information provided by external organisations.

Polymyalgia Rheumatica and Giant Cell Arteritis Scotland (PMR-GCA Scotland)

 <http://www.pmrangca.org.uk/>

 0300 777 5090

You can find out more about tocilizumab in the European public assessment report (EPAR) summary for the public by clicking on this [link](#) or searching for the medicine name on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website.

 <http://www.ema.europa.eu>

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