

What you should know about Rixathon (rituximab)

Important safety information for patients receiving Rixathon therapy

What you should know about Rixathon

If you have rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) or microscopic polyangiitis then finding the right treatment is very important.

It is important to know about the benefits and the risks of any drug. Finding the balance between the two will lead to a treatment that works best for you.

Rixathon is used to treat RA in people who have already tried some other medicines which have either stopped working, have not worked well enough or have caused side effects. Rixathon is usually taken together with another medicine.

Rixathon is also used with corticosteroids for the induction of remission in adults with severe, active GPA or MPA.

Please note that Rixathon has currently only been approved for the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis, Granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's), Microscopic polyangiitis and some specific cancer diseases.

This brochure will answer some of the questions you may have about the side effects and potential risks of Rixathon. It will help you and your doctor decide if Rixathon is the right treatment for you. This brochure does not take the place of speaking to your doctor or nurse.

About this guide

This brochure is for patients who are being treated with Rixathon (rituximab) for conditions other than cancer – please read it carefully.

- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or nurse.

Like all medicines, Rixathon can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. Most side effects are mild to moderate but some may be serious and require treatment. Very rarely, some of these reactions have led to death.

This brochure focuses on important or serious side effects, you should be aware of.

- **See the Rixathon package leaflet for more information on possible side effects due to Rixathon.**
- **If you are receiving Rixathon in combination with other medicines, some of the side effects you may experience may be due to the other medicine.**
- **Please make sure you have a list of all your other medicines with you at any visit to a healthcare professional, such as a doctor, nurse or dentist.**
- **If you get any side effects, please tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist immediately.**

Infections

- Rixathon is a drug that affects your immune system. Rixathon may make you more likely to get infections. These may be serious and require treatment – so it is very important to report any signs of infections to your doctor or nurse immediately.
- The following are all possible signs of infection:
 - Fever or persistent cough
 - Weight loss
 - Pain without injuring yourself
 - Feeling generally unwell or tired/lacking energy.

You should tell your doctor or nurse immediately if you experience any of these symptoms:

- **Fever or persistent cough**
- **Weight loss**
- **Pain without injuring yourself**
- **Feeling generally unwell or tired/lacking energy.**

PML

- Very rarely, some patients taking Rixathon have had a serious brain infection, which can lead to death.
- This infection is called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (usually referred to as PML).
- PML is a rare disease of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord). The central nervous system controls the body's actions and activities, such as movement and balance. PML can lead to severe disability and can cause death.
- Symptoms can vary and may include memory loss, trouble thinking, difficulty with walking or loss of vision.
- PML is caused by a virus, known as JC virus. In most healthy adults, the virus lies dormant (inactive) and is therefore harmless.
- It is unknown exactly why the JC virus is reactivated in some individuals, but it may be linked to having lowered immunity (protection).

Prior to Rixathon treatment, tell your doctor or nurse if you:

- Have an active infection or serious problem with your immune system.
- Are taking or have taken medicines in the past which may affect your immune system, such as chemotherapy, immunosuppressive agents or other medicines that affect the immune system.
- Think you may have an infection, even a mild one like a cold. The cells that are affected by Rixathon help to fight infection and you should wait until the infection has passed before you are given Rixathon.
- Have had a lot of infections in the past or suffer from severe infections.
- Think you may need any vaccinations in the near future, including vaccinations needed to travel to other countries. Some vaccines should not be given at the same time as Rixathon or in the months after you receive Rixathon. Your doctor will check if you should have any vaccines before you receive Rixathon.

During or after treatment with Rixathon

- If you develop symptoms of an infection, such as fever, persistent cough, sore throat, weight loss, burning pain when passing urine, pain without injuring yourself, or feeling weak or generally unwell, inform a doctor or nurse about these symptoms and about your Rixathon treatment immediately.
- If you develop symptoms, such as memory loss, trouble thinking, difficulty with walking or loss of vision, it is very important that you inform your doctor or nurse straight away as it may be related to PML.

You should tell your doctor or nurse immediately if you experience any of these symptoms:

- **Confusion, memory loss or problems thinking**
- **Loss of balance or a change in the way you walk or talk**
- **Decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body**
- **Blurred vision or loss of vision**

Patient Alert Card

- A Patient Alert Card will be included in the carton. Your doctor should give you a copy of the Rixathon Patient Alert Card every time you have a Rixathon infusion.
- The Alert Card contains important safety information that you need to be aware of before you are given Rixathon and during and after treatment with Rixathon.
- Keep the Alert Card with you all the time – for example, keep it in your wallet or purse.
- Show the Alert Card to any doctor, nurse or dentist you see – not just the specialist who prescribes your Rixathon.
- You should also tell your partner or caregiver about your treatment, and show them the Alert Card, since they may notice symptoms that you are not aware of.
- As the effect on the immune system caused by Rixathon can last for several months, side effects may occur even after you have stopped treatment. Please therefore keep the Alert Card with you for 2 years after the last dose of Rixathon.

Keep the Patient Alert Card with you at all times

- **Show it to your partner or caregiver**
- **Show it to any healthcare professional you see, for example your doctor, nurse or dentist**
- **Keep it for 2 years after your last dose of Rixathon**

Further Information

For further information please consult the Package Leaflet included in the carton.

Information about adverse event reporting can be found at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard.

Adverse events should also be reported to Sandoz Ltd on 01276 698020.