

Health Bulletin

FDA Approves New Drug Use That May Improve The Outlook For Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients

(NAPSA)—Living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) has not been easy for Tracy Seasholtz, a teacher, wife and mother of three. Tracy once enjoyed a very active life that included taking care of her young children, biking with her husband, jogging and aerobics.

However, one day Tracy began experiencing discomfort in her wrists, which soon evolved into terrible pain and inflammation in her other joints. After months of tests and numerous doctor visits, Tracy was finally diagnosed with RA. The pain and swelling were so severe that Tracy was no longer able to perform normal, everyday activities that many people take for granted such as getting out of bed, dressing or walking up stairs.

“RA absolutely stopped me, I simply couldn’t do anything,” said Tracy. “I was bedridden and had to rely on family, friends—basically everyone—to help me. It was just unbelievable.”

Facts On RA

RA affects 2.1 million Americans—mostly women. It is a chronic, often painful disease characterized by joint inflammation, usually beginning in the hands, wrists,

knees, and feet. Initial RA symptoms include joint pain and fatigue. As the disease progresses, joints usually become more swollen, inflamed, and stiff. When inflammation persists or does not respond to treatment, it can destroy nearby cartilage, bone, tendons and ligaments, leading to permanent disability.

New Hope

Now, there is new hope for people like Tracy. Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved REMICADE® (infliximab), in combination with methotrexate, as the first and only drug to improve physical function in patients with RA. REMICADE has also been shown to inhibit joint damage and reduce pain and stiffness.

“With Remicade, we now have the ability to change the outlook of rheumatoid arthritis,” says Sergio Schwartzman, MD, Hospital for Special Surgery, New York City. “For the first time, many patients will be able to reclaim their lives—they’ll be able to go back to their activities of normal daily living.”

How It Works

REMICADE belongs to a class of drugs known as monoclonal antibodies. It works by neutralizing

the activity of a key substance that causes inflammation, called TNF-alpha. The potent ability of REMICADE to target TNF-alpha may be the key to inhibiting the disease.

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Very soon after starting REMICADE, Tracy began to see a dramatic improvement in her condition. “Now that I’m on REMICADE, I have a completely different outlook on life. I am able to do all the things I was not able to do when I was feeling at my worst—I feel as if I have my life back.”

Tracy is representative of patients responding to REMICADE under a physician’s supervision. Individual results may vary. Those interested in receiving more information about REMICADE and the new indication can call a special toll-free hotline 1-800-683-7401, or visit www.remicade.com.

About REMICADE

Many people with heart failure should not take REMICADE; so, prior to treatment, patients should discuss any heart condition with their doctor. Patients should tell their doctor right away if they develop new or worsening symptoms of heart failure (such as shortness of breath or swelling of their feet).

There are reports of serious infections, including tuberculosis (TB) and sepsis. Some of these infections have been fatal. Patients should tell their doctor if they have had recent or past exposure to people with TB. Their doctor will evaluate them for TB and perform a skin test. If a patient has latent (inactive) TB, his or her doctor should begin TB treatment before starting REMICADE. If a patient is prone to or has a history of infections, currently has one, or develops one while taking REMICADE, he or she should tell his or her doctor right away. Patients should also tell their doctor if they have lived in a region where histoplasmosis is common, or if they have or have had a disease that affects the nervous system, or if they experience any numbness, tingling, or visual disturbances. There are also reports of serious infusion reaction with hives, difficulty breathing and low blood pressure. In clinical studies, some people experienced the following common side effects: upper respiratory infections, headache, nausea, cough, sinusitis or mild reactions to the infusion such as rash or itchy skin.

Please read important product information about REMICADE at www.remicade.com.