

# RoActemra<sup>®</sup> (tocilizumab)

## Important Safety Information for Patients

This brochure provides key information to help patients and their caregivers understand the use of RoActemra therapy

This educational material is provided by Roche Products Limited and Chugai Pharma UK Ltd and is mandatory as a condition of the marketing authorisation of RoActemra in order to minimise important selected risks.

For more information on RoActemra, please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) and the Patient Alert Card provided to you by your healthcare professional. This information is also available at [www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk) or [www.emcmedicines.com/en-GB/northernireland](http://www.emcmedicines.com/en-GB/northernireland)

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

## How is RoActemra given?

RoActemra is administered either as an intravenous (into a vein) (IV) infusion with a needle or subcutaneous (under the skin) (SC) injection using a pre-filled syringe or pre-filled pen.

### **RoActemra can be prescribed by doctors to appropriate patients for the treatment of:**

- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA)
- Systemic Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (sJIA)
- Juvenile Idiopathic Polyarthritis (also known as polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis; pJIA)
- Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell induced severe or life-threatening Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS)
- Coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) if patients are receiving systemic corticosteroids and require supplemental oxygen or mechanical ventilation

Refer to the Patient Information Leaflet for further information.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed. Do not use RoActemra for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

# Before starting treatment with RoActemra

## Before starting RoActemra, tell the doctor or nurse if you:

- Have signs of an infection (such as a fever, cough or headache, have a skin infection with open sores (chicken pox or shingles)), are being treated for an infection, or get frequent infections. Have diabetes or other conditions that increase the chance for infections
- Have tuberculosis (TB) or have been in close contact with someone who has had TB. Your doctor should test you for TB before starting RoActemra
- Have had intestinal ulcers or diverticulitis (inflammation in parts of your large intestine)
- Have/had liver disease, viral hepatitis
- Have recently had a vaccination (immunisation), such as that for measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), or are scheduled to have one. You should be brought up to date with all immunisations before starting RoActemra. Certain types of vaccines should not be administered while on RoActemra
- Have cancer. Discuss with your doctor or nurse if you should receive RoActemra
- Have heart or circulatory disease such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Have had any allergic reactions to previous medications, including RoActemra
- Have had or now have impaired lung function (e.g., interstitial lung disease, where inflammation and scarring in the lungs make it difficult to get enough oxygen)

## In addition, for patients with sJIA, also tell the doctor or nurse if you:

- Have a history of macrophage activation syndrome (MAS)
- Are taking any other medications to treat sJIA - this includes oral medications, such as NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen), corticosteroids, methotrexate and biologic drugs.

## During treatment with RoActemra

### What tests will be done when receiving treatment with RoActemra?

At each visit to see your doctor or nurse, they may test your blood to help guide your treatment. Here are some things they may look at:

#### Neutrophils

Having enough neutrophils is important to help our bodies fight infections. RoActemra works on the immune system and can cause the number of neutrophils, a form of white blood cells, to drop. For this reason, your doctor may test to make sure you have enough neutrophils and monitor for signs and symptoms of infection.

#### Platelets

Platelets are small blood components that help stop bleeding by forming clots. Some people taking RoActemra have had a drop in the number of platelets in their blood. In clinical trials, the drop in platelets was not associated with any serious bleeding.

#### Liver enzymes

Liver enzymes are proteins produced by your liver which may be released into your blood, sometimes indicating liver damage or disease. Some people who have taken RoActemra have had a rise in liver enzymes, which could be a sign of liver damage. Rises in liver enzymes were seen more often when medications that could be harmful to the liver were used with RoActemra.

If you have a rise in liver enzymes, your doctor should take care of this right away. Your doctor may decide to change your dose of RoActemra, or of other medication, or potentially stop treatment with RoActemra altogether.

#### Cholesterol

Some people who have taken RoActemra have had a rise in blood cholesterol, which is a type of lipid (fat). If you have an increase in cholesterol, your doctor may prescribe a cholesterol-lowering medication.

### Can patients have vaccinations during treatment with RoActemra?

RoActemra is a medication that affects the immune system and may lower the body's ability to fight infection. Immunisation with live or live-attenuated vaccines (which contain very small amounts of the actual germ or weakened germs, such as the MMR vaccine), should not be given during treatment with RoActemra.

## What are the potential serious side effects of RoActemra?

### Infections

RoActemra is a medication that affects your immune system. Your immune system is important because it helps you fight infections. Your ability to fight infections may be lowered with RoActemra. Some infections may become very serious while on RoActemra. Serious infections may require immediate treatment and hospitalisation.

It is very important to report any signs of infection to your doctor or nurse right away.



**Seek immediate medical attention if you develop signs/symptoms of infection such as:**

- Fever and chills
- Persistent cough
- Weight loss
- Throat pain or soreness
- Wheezing
- Red or swollen skin or mouth blisters, skin tears or wounds
- Severe weakness or tiredness
- Stomach ache

## Abdominal pain

Patients taking RoActemra have on rare occasions experienced serious side effects in their stomach and intestines. Symptoms may include fever and persistent abdominal pain with change in bowel habits. **Seek immediate medical attention** if you develop stomach pain or colic, or notice blood in your stool.

## Hepatotoxicity

RoActemra treatment can often cause an increase in a specific set of blood laboratory tests called 'liver enzyme' tests which are used to measure the function of your liver. Changes in these liver enzyme blood tests will be monitored regularly while you are receiving RoActemra.

On rare occasions, patients have experienced serious life-threatening liver problems, some of which have required liver transplant. Rare side effects, which may affect up to 1 in every 1,000 patients receiving RoActemra, include inflammation of the liver (hepatitis) and jaundice (yellowing of the skin). Very rarely (affecting 1 in every 10,000 patients receiving RoActemra) patients can experience liver failure.

- Tell your doctor immediately if you notice a yellowing of the skin and eyes, have dark brown coloured urine, pain or swelling in the upper right side of the stomach area or you feel very tired and confused
- Tell your doctor if you have liver disease before you receive RoActemra

If you experience any of the above side effects, **do not take the next dose until you have informed your doctor** AND your doctor has told you to take the next dose.

## Malignancies

Medicines which act on the immune system, like RoActemra, may increase the risk of malignancy. Your doctor will help you decide whether RoActemra treatment is right for you.

## Side effects in children and adolescents with sJIA or pJIA

Side effects in children and adolescents with sJIA or pJIA are generally similar to those in adults. Some side effects are seen more often in children and adolescents: inflamed nose and throat, headache, feeling sick (nausea) and lower white blood cell counts.

### Children and adolescents

RoActemra pre-filled pen (ACTPen®) should not be used in children under 12 years of age. RoActemra must not be given to children with sJIA weighing less than 10 kg.

If a child has a history of macrophage activation syndrome (activation and uncontrolled proliferation of specific blood cells), tell your doctor. Your doctor will have to decide if they can still be given RoActemra.

## Summary and contact information

This patient brochure reviews some of the most important information about RoActemra. Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about any side effect you experience, bothers you or that does not go away. These side effects listed in this brochure are not all of the possible side effects that you could experience with RoActemra. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for more information. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions or problems.

### Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store.

You should also report side effects to Roche Products Ltd by emailing the Roche Drug Safety Centre at [welwyn.uk\\_dsc@roche.com](mailto:welwyn.uk_dsc@roche.com) or calling +44 (0) 1707 367554. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

Detailed information on this medicine is available on the European Medicines Agency website (<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/human/EPAR/roactemra>).

