



PATIENT FACT SHEET

Tofacitinib Citrate (Xeljanz and Xeljanz XR)



WHAT IS IT?

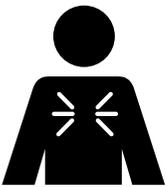
Tofacitinib (Xeljanz) is an oral drug used to treat adults with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in cases where methotrexate did not work well. Tofacitinib works by blocking the body's production of enzymes called Janus kinases (JAKs). JAKs play a role in joint inflammation in RA, which can cause pain, swelling and stiffness.



HOW TO TAKE IT

Tofacitinib is a pill that is taken either as 5mg twice per day (Xeljanz) or as 11mg once per day (Xeljanz XR). You may take tofacitinib tablets with or without food. People with moderate to severe renal impairment or moderate hepatic impairment, should take only one 5mg tablet per day. Tofacitinib may be used alone or in combination with methotrexate or other DMARDs. Tofacitinib should not

be given in combination with another biologic drug or other potent immunosuppressants, such as azathioprine or mycophenolate. Some patients will start to see improvement within a few weeks, but it may take several months to take full effect. Blood tests will be used to monitor increases in cholesterol or liver enzymes and reductions in blood cell counts while taking tofacitinib.



SIDE EFFECTS

Tofacitinib can lower the immune system's ability to fight infections. The most common side effects of tofacitinib are upper respiratory tract infections, headache, diarrhea and nasopharyngitis. All patients should be tested for tuberculosis before starting on tofacitinib. Patients should also be screened for hepatitis B and C prior to starting tofacitinib since this

medication may increase risk of reactivation of these infections. Tofacitinib has been associated with increased cholesterol levels in some patients and should be periodically monitored. If your cholesterol level becomes too high, it is possible you may need to start taking a medication to lower it. Lymphoma and other malignancies have been observed in patients treated with tofacitinib.



TELL YOUR DOCTOR

If you develop symptoms of an infection such as a fever or cough, or if you think you are having any side effects (such as abdominal pain, bloody bowel movements, or allergic reactions), contact your doctor. Notify your doctor if you become pregnant or are planning pregnancy, or if you are breastfeeding. Be sure to talk with your doctor before receiving any vaccines or undergoing

any surgeries. Live vaccines should be avoided while on this medication and you should discuss updating your vaccinations prior to starting this medication. These include the shingles vaccine, the nasal spray flu vaccine, and others such as the measles, mumps, rubella, and yellow fever vaccines.

Written June 2018 by Paul Sufka, MD and reviewed by the American College of Rheumatology Communications and Marketing Committee. This information is provided for general education only. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for professional medical advice, diagnosis and treatment of a medical or health condition.