

# Risankizumab (Skyrizi®) Therapy for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

# Risankizumab (Skyrizi®) Therapy

Your health care provider feels that treatment with risankizumab may help you manage your inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The brand name for risankizumab is Skyrizi®.

This pamphlet gives basic information about risankizumab. It can help you choose whether to use this treatment. It does not take the place of information or instructions given to you by your health care provider or pharmacist.

## What is IBD?

- In IBD, your immune system cannot tell the difference between foreign (from outside your body) substances and your body's own tissues. This can cause:
  - › Inflammation (swelling) of the bowel
  - › Ulceration (sores) of the bowel
  - › Diarrhea (loose, watery poops)
  - › Pain
- IBD is usually treated with medications that:
  - › Lower inflammation
  - › Suppress (lower) the immune system

## **What is risankizumab?**

- Risankizumab is a biologic medication.
- A biologic medication is a type of medication that treats inflammation.

## **How does it work?**

- When you have an infection, white blood cells go to certain body tissues as part of your natural immune response.
- Inflammation and other symptoms of IBD are caused by:
  - › a higher number of white blood cells entering your intestine.
  - › higher levels of a protein that is naturally in your body, called interleukin 23 (IL-23).
- Risankizumab blocks this protein to lower inflammation.

## **How is risankizumab given?**

- Your first 3 risankizumab treatments will be given by an intravenous (I.V.) infusion. The medication is given through a small, flexible tube inserted (put) into a vein in your arm.
- The infusion will take place at a private infusion clinic in your area.
- The infusion takes about 1 hour.

- You will get 1 infusion a month for 3 months. One month after your third infusion, you will come to the clinic and learn how to do injections yourself.

- The nurse at the infusion clinic will show you how to use a Skyrizi® on-body injector and help you inject your first dose. They will make sure you are ready to self-inject (give yourself injections) the medication at home.



- When you and the nurse feel that you are comfortable doing the injections yourself, you will do them once every 8 weeks. This will help to control your symptoms.
- If you are not comfortable self-injecting, you can come to the infusion clinic for support or to have a nurse give you your injection.
- Risankizumab cannot be taken by mouth because your digestive system would destroy it.

**Do not try to inject this medication on your own until you fully understand how.**

## How long will I need to take risankizumab?

- Risankizumab can take up to 4 months to take full effect. Your IBD health care provider will check how you are responding to the medication and decide if you should keep taking it.
- You can check if the medication is working by monitoring your IBD symptoms or having your health care provider do tests, like:
  - › Stool (poop) sample
  - › Colonoscopy (scope of the bowel)
- These tests will check if the medication has improved the inflammation.
- If the medication is working well and you are not having major side effects, your IBD health care provider may want you to stay on risankizumab long-term (years) for your IBD.

## **How much does risankizumab cost?**

- Biologic medications like risankizumab are very expensive. They can cost thousands of dollars a month.
- The Patient Support Program for risankizumab will work with your insurance company or Nova Scotia Pharmacare. Any part of the cost that is not covered by your insurance or Pharmacare is usually paid for by the Patient Support Program.
- A nurse coordinator with the Patient Support Program will stay in contact with you and your IBD health care provider. They will help you with any paperwork that may be needed to cover the cost of this medication.

## **Before you start taking risankizumab:**

- Before you start taking risankizumab, there are things you can do to lower your risks and help the treatment work better.
- You will have blood tests, a tuberculosis (TB) skin or blood test, and a chest X-ray. These tests will check for active infections.
- Your IBD health care provider may want you to update your vaccinations for:
  - › Tetanus
  - › Varicella (chicken pox)
  - › Pneumococcal (pneumonia)

## **While taking risankizumab**

- **Do not get any live vaccines (vaccines that have a weakened form of a virus in them) while taking risankizumab.** You are at a higher risk of infection from the virus. If you are due for vaccinations or plan to be vaccinated, tell your IBD health care provider.
- **It is safe to get a yearly flu vaccine (flu shot) and a COVID-19 vaccine while taking risankizumab.**
- Tell your IBD health care provider about any other health problems you have. Risankizumab may make them worse.

## **What are the possible side effects of risankizumab?**

- Like any medication, risankizumab has possible side effects. These include:
  - › Infection in your nose, throat, or windpipe (tube that connects your throat and lungs)
  - › Headache
  - › Tiredness
  - › Itchy skin
  - › Fungal skin infection
  - › Vaginal yeast infections
  - › Redness at the injection site (where the needle is inserted)

- Risankizumab affects your immune system. It may increase your chance of getting:
  - › An infection
  - › A serious allergic reaction
- Risankizumab may cause liver problems. Tell your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms:
  - › Tiredness
  - › Loss of appetite (not feeling hungry)
  - › Pain on the right side of your stomach (belly)
  - › Dark urine (pee)
  - › Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice)
- We will ask you to have blood tests every 3 months to check your liver.

**Tell your health care provider if you have any of the following signs of an infection:**

- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- › Chills
- › Cough
- › Hoarse (sore) throat
- › Pain in your lower back or side
- › Pain or trouble when urinating (peeing)
- › Headache



- If you think you have an infection, visit your primary health care provider or go to a walk-in clinic. **Tell them that you are taking risankizumab.**
- **If you get an infection while taking risankizumab, tell your IBD health care provider.** They will tell you if you should delay your injection and when to start it again. If the infection becomes serious, they may tell you to stop your treatment.

**Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of these signs of a serious allergic reaction that start suddenly after injecting risankizumab:**

- › Rash
- › Itchy skin
- › Trouble breathing
- › Chest pain
- › Swelling in your face, throat, legs, or feet

## Pregnancy and breast or chestfeeding

- Tell your health care provider if you are pregnant, plan to get pregnant, or do get pregnant while taking risankizumab.
- It is not yet known whether risankizumab is safe to use during pregnancy.
- Tell your health care provider if you are breast or chestfeeding or plan to breast or chestfeed.

## Important

- Always talk with your health care provider about other medications you are taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products.
- **If you have any serious side effects or side effects that do not go away, tell your IBD health care provider right away so changes can be made.** Side effects can usually be controlled with other medications, but you may need to lower your risankizumab dose (amount) or stop taking it.
- Talking with your IBD health care provider when you see any changes in side effects will help you pick the treatment that will work best for you.

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.