


# Omalizumab for severe asthma



This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.



Do not administer the injection yourself unless you have been shown how to do it, in case you inject it into the wrong place.

## Name of medicine

**Omalizumab**

**Brand name:** Xolair

## Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?


Omalizumab is used to treat severe asthma that is caused by allergies and that has not improved with other treatments. Patients with allergic asthma may have high levels of a protein called immunoglobulin E in their blood. This protein triggers the allergic reaction. Omalizumab reduces levels of immunoglobulin E, reducing symptoms of allergy. You may see it described as a biologic, targeted medicine or monoclonal antibody.

## What is omalizumab available as?

Omalizumab is given by subcutaneous injection (under the skin). The injection is usually done by a healthcare professional to start with, to monitor any side-effects.

## How should I give it?

Your health professional may allow you to administer the medicine at home, or older children may be able to do the injection themselves. You will be shown how to do this, and instructions are also provided with the medicine.


 Do not do the injection yourself unless you have been shown how, in case you inject the medicine into the wrong place.

## When is omalizumab given?

Omalizumab is usually given every 2 weeks. This may be decreased to every 4 weeks once immunoglobulin E levels have decreased to a stable level.

## How much should I give?

The right amount of medicine is already in the syringe. Your doctor will tell you (or the health professional) how many injections to give.

 It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.

## When should the medicine start to work?

Omalizumab starts to work straight away, reducing levels of immunoglobulin E in the blood. However, it may take a few weeks before you see any improvement in your child's symptoms. It can take a few months for the full effect to be reached. It is important to continue with your child's other prescribed medicines during this time. Your child will be reviewed to see how well the medicine is working.

## What if my child is sick (vomits)?

You do not need to worry if your child is sick, as the medicine will still work.

## What if I forget to give omalizumab?

If you administer omalizumab at home and have forgotten, give the injection as soon as you remember. Set a reminder to give the next injection 2 or 4 weeks from that date.

## What if I think I have given too much?

As omalizumab comes in a pre-filled syringe, you will not be able to give your child too much.

## Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they cause effects that we don't want (side-effects).

## Side-effects you must do something about

Your child may get an allergic reaction within the first 24 hours of an omalizumab injection. The first few doses are administered in a healthcare setting, in case this happens.



If your child has any wheeziness or shortness of breath, feels light-headed, has a rapid heart rate, develops itching or flushing, or has any swelling to the throat or tongue, call an ambulance or take them to hospital straight away.

- Some people get fever, joint pain and rash 1–5 days after an injection of omalizumab. Contact your doctor if this happens.
- Children who are at risk may get a parasite infection (worms). Talk to your doctor if you are concerned.

## Other side-effects you need to know about


- Your child may get pains in their arms and legs or other joints.
- They may feel dizzy or tired.
- They may experience itching or skin rash and pain or discomfort in their ears.
- There may sometimes be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at [yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/](http://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/).

- More information on side-effects can be found in a [leaflet](#) on our website.

### Can other medicines be given at the same time as omalizumab?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Omalizumab should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving medicine.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

### Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

-  Continue to give your child all their other medicines for asthma while they are taking omalizumab, unless your doctor tells you to stop any of them.

### General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact a doctor straight away.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

### Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep this medicine in a fridge, in the packaging it came in. Do not use if it has been frozen at any time.
- Do not use if it has been out of the fridge for more than 48 hours (2 days) in total.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.

### Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about omalizumab and other medicines used to treat asthma and wheeze.

You can also get useful information from:

#### England: NHS 111

Tel 111

[nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

#### Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111

[nhs24.com](https://www.nhs24.com)

#### Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111

[111.wales.nhs.uk](https://111.wales.nhs.uk)

#### Northern Ireland: NI Direct

[nidirect.gov.uk](https://nidirect.gov.uk)

#### Asthma + Lung UK

0300 222 5800

[asthmaandlung.org.uk](https://asthmaandlung.org.uk)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](https://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)