

ADALIMUMAB (HUMIRA)

Adalimumab (Humira) is a promising new treatment for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Humira is approved by the FDA for the treatment of psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.

Humira is one of the new class of drugs called biologics. These drugs are engineered from proteins produced by living cells. The newest research focuses on psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis being caused by an overactive immune system. This medication specifically targets a substance called tumor necrosis factor which is responsible for producing much of the inflammation, redness and scaling of psoriasis.

In the past psoriasis was treated with either local treatment such as creams or ointments or whole body treatment such as phototherapy or oral medications. In many cases, these treatments can be effective, but in other cases were not successful.

Humira is a medication that is self injected once every two weeks. This administration is quite easy to perform and we will instruct you on the proper way to do this. All of the materials for injection are supplied with the prescription.

Before the treatment is started, a PPD test needs to be performed on the skin of your arm. This is a test which detects prior exposure to tuberculosis. If this test has not been done already, it can be easily performed in our office.

Side effects with this medication are usually rare. The most frequent side effect is slight tenderness at the site where the medication is injected. This usually goes away in spite of continuing the treatment. If these areas are bothersome, then Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Motrin (ibuprofen) would be helpful. As with any medication, there are potential allergic reactions. Because Humira works on areas of the immune system, there are theoretical risks for increased infections and lymphoma. This requires you to be aware of your general health and report any problems such as a lingering cold or fever. There have been case reports of this class of drugs worsening symptoms of multiple sclerosis and congestive heart failure and therefore should not be used in presence of those conditions.

Humira is a medication which is potentially a great advance over the previous treatments for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. It seems to work better than the conventional treatments with fewer side effects. If you have any further questions regarding this medication, please ask me before you leave the office.