

## **APREMILAST (OTEZLA)**

Apremilast (Otezla) is an oral medicine, which is very effective in the treatment of plaque psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. As with any medication, it is important to take it in the proper fashion. Apremilast works by inhibiting a protein in your body called phosphodiesterase. This results in a decrease in inflammation which helps reduce the redness, scaling, and joint pain of psoriasis. It can take many weeks for apremilast to have beneficial effects so be patient

Apremilast is a pill, which is taken on a twice per day basis. It may be taken with or without meals. Do not crush, chew, or split pills.

Most patients who take apremilast do not have any side effects. Otezla may cause minor intestinal symptoms including diarrhea, especially when treatment is started, occurring in roughly 15 to 20 percent of patients. These side effects usually go away in spite of continuing the treatment. Tolerability of apremilast is improved by slowly increasing the dose when treatment is initiated. The recommended dose titration schedule for adults is as follows:

- Days 1 and 2: one 10 mg pill in morning
- Days 3 and 4: one 10 mg pill in morning and one 10 mg pill in evening
- Days 5 and 6: one 10 mg pill in morning and one 20 mg pill in evening
- Days 7 and 8: one 20 mg pill in morning and 20 mg pill in evening
- Days 9 and 10: one 20 mg pill in morning and 30 mg pill in evening
- Day 11 and thereafter: one 30 mg pill in morning and one 30 mg pill in evening

Other possible side effects include a rash if you are allergic to the medication (rare), nausea, headache, depression or weight loss. Of course many patients are pleased if slight weight loss happens. You should monitor your weight while taking apremilast. It is important to report any side effects or problems that you feel may be related to the medication. You will be monitored for these side effects in the course of your treatment. Please inform me if you are breast feeding or planning to get pregnant.

If you have any other questions regarding this medication, please ask me before you leave the office.