

Patient Information Sheet: Ustekinumab for IBD

What are the other names for ustekinumab?

Biologic Class	Generic Name	Innovator Name	Biosimilars
Anti-interleukin-12 and interleukin-23	Ustekinumab	Stelara®	None currently available.

*for more information on the different names of biologics and what they mean please view the Biologic Summary information sheet.

What is interleukin-12 and interleukin-23 (IL-12 and IL-23)?

Interleukins are chemical messengers that circulate in the body naturally. In inflammatory bowel disease, the body appears to produce too much of these interleukins which causes an excessive inflammatory response.

What is a human antibody to IL-12 and IL-23?

Ustekinumab is a medication designed block a component of IL-12 and IL-23 called p-40. By blocking these messengers, it reduces inflammation.

When is an antibody to IL-12 and IL-23 (ustekinumab) given?

Ustekinumab is most often used to treat patients with moderate to severe Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. It can be used as a first-line therapy or in those who have failed other therapies. Ustekinumab is not a cure but it can induce remission and, when given over the long-term, maintain remission of inflammatory bowel disease.

How is ustekinumab given?

Ustekinumab is first administered intravenously during a 1 to 2-hour infusion. After your first infusion, ustekinumab will continue to be administered subcutaneously. Your IBD health practitioner will determine which dose interval is best for you. If ustekinumab is effective in a patient with inflammatory bowel disease, they may be prescribed it long-term for maintenance purposes.

What are the potential side effects of ustekinumab?

The short-term side effects are flu-like symptoms.

Patients receiving ustekinumab are at increased risk for infections. Any signs of fever should be reported to your IBD health practitioner promptly. It is possible to develop an allergic reaction to ustekinumab or to experience a localized injection site reaction. It is also possible to develop an infection of the nasopharynx (nasopharyngitis).



Rare side effects include a lupus-like reaction (persisting joint pain, fever, and rash) and an increased risk of a psoriasis-like rash.

Do I need to get any blood tests while I am receiving ustekinumab?

Yes, your IBD health practitioner will likely request monthly blood tests while taking this medication. Regular follow-up visits will also be arranged to discuss progress and concerns with your IBD health practitioner.

What is the cost of ustekinumab?

Ustekinumab is extremely expensive. The majority of patients require insurance to help pay for the medication. This can be either a private insurance plan and/or a provincial/territorial high cost drug plan.