

# Rituximab and biosimilars

## Switching from Mabthera to Truxima

This leaflet offers more information about your medicines for your rheumatological condition and our plan to switch your treatment from Mabthera to Truxima. If you have any further questions or concerns after reading this leaflet, please speak to Diane Hill, Biologics Co-ordinator (Tel. 020 8266 6801) or Malama Sumbwanyambe, Biologics Nurse (Tel. 020 8266 6807).

## Why am I receiving this leaflet?

You are currently undergoing treatment with Rituximab (Mabthera). You may be aware that the patent for **Mabthera** has expired and that generic versions of Rituximab (called **biosimilar drugs**) have now been approved and are available to patients. The biosimilar version of Mabthera used at St George's is called **Truxima**.

## What is a biosimilar?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined a biosimilar as **a drug that is similar in terms of quality, safety and efficacy (effectiveness) to the original licensed product**. This means that biosimilars (such as Truxima) are allowed to have small structural differences from the original licensed product (Mabthera) but this must not alter how well the drug works, how safe it is or how the drug reacts with the body's immune system.

Biosimilars are regulated in a similar way to the original licensed product. The European Medicines Agency has approved the use of Truxima as it has been shown to be as safe and as effective as Mabthera.

We are confident that Truxima is just as effective and it has the same safety profile as Mabthera. Because Truxima offers cost savings we aim to switch patients currently using Mabthera to Truxima. Some of the savings may enable us to treat other patients with rheumatic conditions with biologic therapies.

## What does this mean for me?

Because Truxima and Mabthera contain the same active product (Rituximab), treatment for your rheumatological condition remains unchanged. An information leaflet on Rituximab, written by Arthritis Research UK, is attached to this leaflet. If you have any questions about this leaflet please speak to the nurse or doctor in charge of your care.

## Will any additional monitoring be required?

We are not required to make any additional safety checks in patients switched to Truxima but we still plan to monitor every patient who switches. You will be contacted by telephone by a member of the rheumatology team eight weeks after you switch for us to check that Truxima is working just as well as Mabthera and to follow up on any issues which you may have encountered.

As well as this, if you are eligible and with your consent, we will register your anonymised treatment data on a national database (the British Society for Rheumatology Biologics Register). This database exists to monitor the long term effectiveness and safety of all biologics, including biosimilars.

## What if I have further questions?

If you have concerns about switching to Truxima, we are here to help. Please ask Diane, the Biologics Co-ordinator or Malama, the Biologics nurse. If necessary they will arrange a meeting with one of the doctors to answer any further questions you may have.

## Contact us

If you have any further questions, please contact the outpatient rheumatology clinic on **020 8266 6801- Diane Hill** or **020 8266 6807- Malama Sumbwanyambe** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or you can email [Anti-TNF.enquiries@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:Anti-TNF.enquiries@stgeorges.nhs.uk).

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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