

### **REMICADE (INFLIXIMAB)**

Remicade (Infliximab) is a promising new treatment for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Remicade was approved by the FDA in 1997 for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Nearly all of the medications that help these two conditions also help severe psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Remicade 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.

Remicade is a unique medicine that is given via an intravenous infusion. This is done in the outpatient infusion area of the 295 Essjay Road, Buffalo Medical Group Infusion Suite. You are monitored by the nurse who administers the infusion. The dosage of Remicade is based on your body weight. It normally takes about two to three hours for the medication to be infused. There are usually no side effects associated with the actual infusion; however, there can be allergic reactions which are easily treated or preventable if they have developed with prior infusions. Hopefully the medication can be administered on a schedule that is convenient for you. The entire treatment course is three infusions over the first six weeks and in many cases an infusion every eight weeks thereafter.

In general, most patients who receive Remicade infusions do not experience any side effects. Before the treatment is done, 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.

Occasional side effects associated with Remicade infusions include the mild allergic reactions associated with the infusion itself, headache or mild stomach symptoms. Rarely there can be severe allergic reactions. Because Remicade works on areas of the immune system, there are theoretical risks for increased infections or lymphomas. This requires you to be aware of your general health and report any problems such as a lingering cold or fever. If you have any problems with the treatment or the infusion, please let the infusion personnel know or call my office.

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