

Reminders for Any Psoriasis Patient on a Biologic Medicine

(We have numerous patients doing well on these types of medicines without any problems, but they are still serious medicines).

- Blood work (complete blood count and comprehensive metabolic panel) and dermatology office visits usually are every six months, but sometimes are more frequent. TB test is usually done every year. (Initial blood work includes the above, but also includes a hepatitis panel. Sometimes the hepatitis panel is not covered by insurance. Sometimes the hepatitis panel is repeated).
- You are instructed to see your primary care physician regularly (at least yearly).
- You may be at increased risk for infections and malignancies. Report any changes in your health (including significant changes in weight) to your primary care doctor and to your dermatologist. Perform monthly self-checks of your skin, and report any new, changing, or suspicious skin lesions to your dermatologist. Practice rigorous sun protection to not add to your possibly increased risk of skin cancer. You should not administer your biologic shot if you have a high fever or severe illness.
- Biologic medicines that block tumor necrosis factor (Enbrel, Humira, Remicade, and Simponi) are not recommended for people with a history of heart failure or people with a history of (or possibly even a family history of) multiple sclerosis or other types of demyelinating neurologic disease.
- Do not receive any vaccinations (except a yearly inactivated flu shot) without getting the approval of your dermatologist. (I recommend the yearly flu shot, but only the inactivated viral shot, not the live nasal inhalation. The CDC and the National Psoriasis Foundation recommend it, although specific studies on the flu vaccine in biologic patients have not been performed). Live vaccinations may be dangerous on a biologic medicine and are prohibited. The administration of inactivated, killed, or otherwise noninfectious vaccines is generally safe but may be associated with a diminished or suboptimal immunologic response due to antibody inhibition.
- Foreign travel may put you at further increased risk of infection. Consult the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website and your primary care doctor well before any travel for possible recommended vaccinations. Then call your dermatologist for specific instructions before obtaining any vaccinations.