

## **Rituximab for Nephrotic Syndrome**

Rituximab is a medicine that is used to temporarily lower the immune system. It can be used to treat Nephrotic Syndrome when a child is having side effects from steroids.

### **How does Rituximab work?**

Rituximab works by lowering the levels of B cells in your body. B cells help your body fight infection.

### **How should I take Rituximab? How is Rituximab given?**

Rituximab is a liquid given slowly over a period of several hours by IV (in the vein) in a hospital.

### **What are the possible side effects of Rituximab?**

Rituximab can cause some reactions during the time the drug is being given or shortly after. These are called infusion reactions. They will usually happen with the first or second dose and are less common with later doses. To help prevent this type of reaction, Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) are given before Rituximab. However, tell your doctor immediately if you have a reaction during the infusion and within 24 hours afterwards such as:

- Chills, headache, fever, swelling of the tongue or throat, or flushing
- Tiredness, pain in joints or muscle stiffness, diarrhea (loose, watery bowel movements), or night sweats
- Rash, with or without blisters (this rarely comes up a few weeks after the infusion)

Most of the following side effects are not common, but they may be a sign of a serious problem. **Call your doctor** right away or go to the Emergency Department if you have any of the following side effects:

- Fever or chills
- Cough or sore throat
- Abdominal pain or stomach pain
- Lower back or side pain
- Chest pain
- Swelling of the tongue or throat, face, hands, or feet (CALL 911)
- Trouble breathing or swallowing (CALL 911)
- Fast or uneven heartbeat
- Severe skin reactions such sores or peeling skin
- Blood in urine or stools
- Unusual bruising or bleeding
- Dizziness, drowsiness

### **What are safety measures I should take while taking Rituximab?**

- If you have to have an operation, dental procedure, or emergency treatment within a year of getting Rituximab, tell the doctor or dentist that you are on Rituximab.

- Rituximab may make you dizzy, drowsy, and less alert than normal. Watch carefully when you are doing something that you need to be alert for, such as climbing stairs.
- Rituximab can lower the number of white blood cells in the blood temporarily, which increases chances of getting an infection.
- You should not receive any immunizations (vaccines) without your doctor's approval while being treated with rituximab, especially "live" vaccines, like flu, chickenpox, or MMR
- Hepatitis B infection may become worse during Rituximab treatment so you should get the Hepatitis B test before being treated with Rituximab
- Check with your doctor before taking any new medications after getting Rituximab