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INFORMATION ON APREMILAST (OTEZLA)

What is Otezla?

Otezla is a medication which targets a pathway inside cells known as the PDE4 pathway. It is typically used to treat a skin disease known as psoriasis but may occasionally be used for other reasons as well including lichen planopilaris. By inhibiting PDE4, levels of TNF-alpha, IL-17, IL-23 and IL-10 are suppressed. This may reduce inflammation.

What is the dose?

The MAXIMUM dose is 30 mg twice per day, but not patients with scarring alopecia need this dose. Dr Donovan typically starts the following schedule

DAY	DOSAGE
Day 1	10 mg in the morning; nothing at night
Day 2	10 mg in the morning; 10 mg at night
Day 3	10 mg in the morning; 20 mg at night
Day 4	20 mg in the morning; 20 mg at night
Day 5	20 mg in the morning; 30 mg at night
Day 6	30 mg in the morning; 30 mg at night

What side effects are possible?

A number of side effects are possible, including

1. Diarrhea (24 % women; 15 % men)
2. Nausea (30 % women; 10 % men)
3. Vomiting (8 % women; 1.6 % men)
4. Headache
5. Colds and Flu (8%)
6. Decreased Appetite
7. Abdominal pain, indigestion and discomfort (2 %)
8. Depression
9. Migraine (12 % women; 5 % men)
10. Heart palpitations (1 %)
11. Weight loss (may require discontinuation)

NOTE: The side effects of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are generally limited to the first two weeks for most patients)

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Who should NOT take Otezla?

1. Individuals with rare hereditary diseases including those with galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency and glucose-galactose malabsorption. These reason is that LACTOSE is present in Otezla
2. Women who are pregnant
3. Women who are breastfeeding.
4. Individuals on certain medications (see below)
5. Individuals with kidney disease

What drugs can interact with Otezla?

1. Rifampin
2. Seizure medications (phenobarbital, carbamazepine, phenytoin)
3. Cyclosporine and tacrolimus
4. Methotrexate
5. Biological therapies like the TNF inhibitors
6. St John's wort (a herbal supplement)

What tests are needed BEFORE starting Otezla?

1. Weight measurement
2. Blood tests – CBC, TSH, ferritin, creatinine, urinalysis, liver enzymes, HIV, hepatitis screening, zinc
3. ECG

What tests are needed AFTER starting Otezla?

1. Weight measurement every month
 2. Blood tests after 2 weeks, and again at month 1 and month 3
 - a. CBC, TSH, ferritin, creatinine, urinalysis, liver enzymes, zinc
 3. ECG repeat at month 1
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