



Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC

*Dermatologist & Hair Restoration Specialist
Medical Director, Donovan Medical*

905-750 West Broadway Street Vancouver BC M5Z 1K1

Phone: (604) 283-9299 Fax: (416) 981-7407

Email: vancouveroffice@donovanmedical.com Web: www.donovanmedical.com

OTEZLA (Apremilast)

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.

What is the dose?

The MAXIMUM dose is 30 mg twice per day, but most patients are maintained on 10 mg twice daily or 20 mg twice daily. Dr. Donovan typically starts the following:

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

Side effects (continued)

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)

(Side effects of nausea vomiting and diarrhea were generally limited to the first two weeks for most patients)

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 and blood pressure

What tests are needed AFTER starting Otezla?

1. Weight measurement every month
2. Blood tests – CBC, TSH, ferritin, creatinine, urinalysis, liver enzymes, HIV, hepatitis screening, zinc after 2 weeks, and again at month 1 and month 3,
3. ECG and blood pressure repeat at month 1

How does the medication work?

By inhibiting PDE4, levels of TNF-alpha, IL-17, IL-23 and IL-10 are suppressed. This may reduce inflammation.
