



Management of Patients Who Plan to Travel

Evidence Based Medicine

Official recommendations

Expert opinion

Can tocilizumab-treated patients travel?

Tocilizumab-treated patients can travel. The Summary of Product Characteristics⁽⁴⁾ contains no specific recommendations about travelling and, therefore, the advice given here is based on the opinions of experts. Precautions are in order, and trips to high-risk countries are not recommended.

What immunisations should be recommended before starting tocilizumab? (see the sheet entitled “Immunisations”)

Depending on the country of travel, specific immunisations are required. Planning ahead is crucial in this situation.

When a live attenuated vaccine must be administered to a tocilizumab-treated patient, the treatment must be stopped at least **70 days (5 times the half-life) before the immunisation**. The recommended interval **from vaccine administration to tocilizumab re-treatment is 2 weeks at least and 4 weeks ideally**.

In practice, yellow fever is the main concern. Before and during tocilizumab therapy, patients should be asked routinely about plans to travel to areas of yellow fever endemicity.

When an inactivated vaccine (hepatitis A or B, typhoid fever) must be given to a tocilizumab-treated patient, the vaccine can be given at any time, and there is no need to postpone the next tocilizumab infusion.

Although the effectiveness of inactivated vaccines in tocilizumab-treated patients is somewhat uncertain, studies with other biological agents have established that these vaccines can induce an immune response. Thus, the risk/benefit ratio is in favour of administering inactivated vaccines if needed.

Can tocilizumab-treated patients take antimalarial prophylaxis?

Antimalarial prophylaxis is not contraindicated. Concomitant treatment with chloroquine or its derivatives (which are antimalarials) does not affect tocilizumab pharmacokinetics.

What other measures should be taken?

Patients should be advised to carry written information (in English if possible) about their treatment (dose and date), for use in the event of health problems during their stay abroad.

During their stay, they should follow the usual precautions regarding hygiene, food and beverages, and insects. Medical advice should be obtained promptly in the event of a fever or symptoms of infection.

Patients travelling to remote areas where medical help is unavailable should carry antibiotics for use in the event of infectious symptoms (e.g., amoxicillin + clavulanic acid and a quinolone, a combination that is effective in common infections of the lower respiratory tract and urinary tract).