



# INJECTABLE TREATMENTS FOR SEVERE ASTHMA

## WHAT IS SEVERE ASTHMA?

Asthma is a **long-term** condition that causes **inflammation** in the airways of the lungs, making it harder to breathe. Asthma symptoms happen when the muscles around your airways **tighten** and become **narrower**, and **thick mucus** can block the airways. This leads to symptoms such as coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing), and tightness in the chest.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Some people experience **frequent or life-threatening** asthma attacks and/or **persistent** symptoms despite taking high doses of daily asthma medications according to their doctor's instructions. This is called **severe asthma**.<sup>4,5</sup>

About **1 in 20 people** with asthma suffer from severe asthma.<sup>4</sup>



### What is an asthma attack?

When your asthma symptoms suddenly worsen or become severe, this is called an **asthma attack** (exacerbation). During an asthma attack, some people may require hospital admission for **urgent** medical care, as these episodes can be life-threatening.



## COMMON TYPES OF SEVERE ASTHMA<sup>6</sup>



### Allergic asthma

- Triggered by allergens such as pollen, dust mites, skin flakes from pets (dander)
- Commonly starts in childhood



### Eosinophilic asthma

- Inflammation in the airways caused by high levels of a type of white blood cell called eosinophils
- Commonly starts in adulthood

Doctors may run medical tests to find out which type of severe asthma you have before providing the appropriate treatment. Most patients with severe asthma have either allergic or eosinophilic asthma, or both.

## HOW IS SEVERE ASTHMA MANAGED?

Asthma is treated with **inhalers**, which are devices that deliver drugs **directly** into your airway.<sup>3,7</sup> For patients with **severe asthma**, other treatments including injectable biological drugs are often needed as **add-on** therapy to inhalers.<sup>5,8</sup> Your doctor will assess your age, medical test results and preferences to advise which treatment is suitable for you.

### WRITTEN ASTHMA ACTION PLAN (WAAP)

Your doctor or nurse will work with you to develop a WAAP, which serves as your **personalised** guide for managing your condition.

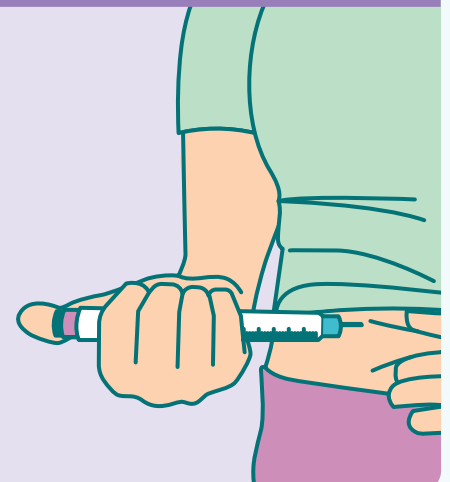


### INHALERS

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to learn more about inhalers from our factsheet on "Inhalers for treating asthma"



### INJECTABLE BIOLOGICAL DRUGS FOR SEVERE ASTHMA



## INJECTABLE BIOLOGICAL DRUGS FOR SEVERE ASTHMA

Injectable drugs include:

benralizumab

dupilumab

mepolizumab

omalizumab

tezepelumab

### DID YOU KNOW?



These drugs are called **biologics** or biological medicines because they contain active ingredients made by living cells. Highly similar copies of some biologics are available. They are called **biosimilars** and are designed to work in the same way and provide the same health benefits as the original biologic, but are usually less expensive. [Click here](#) or scan the QR code to learn more about available biosimilars.



## WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

ACE reviewed the available clinical evidence and received expert advice from doctors about the use of injectable treatments for severe asthma.<sup>9</sup>

**Benralizumab, dupilumab, mepolizumab, omalizumab** and **tezepelumab** are effective treatment options for reducing the number of asthma exacerbations.



All five drugs have different side effects. Please consult your doctor or pharmacist before starting treatment.



## SUBSIDISED INJECTABLE BIOLOGICAL DRUGS FOR SEVERE ASTHMA

### Subsidised

- ✓ Benralizumab\*
- ✓ Omalizumab biosimilar (Omyclo)<sup>#</sup>

### Not subsidised<sup>A</sup>

- ✗ Dupilumab
- ✗ Mepolizumab
- ✗ Omalizumab (brands other than Omyclo, such as Xolair)
- ✗ Tezepelumab

\*for patients with severe eosinophilic asthma

<sup>#</sup>for patients with severe allergic asthma

<sup>A</sup>Not subsidised because their benefits do not justify their costs at the price offered by the companies

Treatment costs are subsidised by **40% to 75%** for eligible patients<sup>9,10</sup>



## KEY MESSAGES

Injectable drugs such as benralizumab and omalizumab biosimilar (Omyclo) are subsidised for certain patients with severe asthma, making them more affordable. The treatment recommended for you will depend on factors such as your type of asthma, your previous treatments, medical history and preferences. Talk with your doctor about which option is suitable for you and any concerns you may have. You can also speak to a **medical social worker** if you need further financial assistance for any treatments.

### Sources

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