

# Treatments for MS:

## Ocrevus® (ocrelizumab)

**There is a range of disease modifying therapies approved for people with relapsing remitting MS in Australia. These therapies, also called immunotherapies, work to reduce disease activity in the central nervous system and reduce the frequency and severity of relapses in people with MS.**

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### What is Ocrevus® and how does it work?

The active ingredient of Ocrevus® is ocrelizumab. It is used for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS) to delay the progression of physical disability and to reduce the frequency of relapse. Ocrevus is also indicated for the treatment of patients with primary progressive multiple sclerosis (PPMS) to delay the progression of physical disability.

In MS, the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective layer (myelin) around the nerve cells. This causes inflammation and damage which stops the nervous system working properly. Ocrevus® works on the immune system to reduce the inflammation and attacks on the nervous system.

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### How is Ocrevus® administered?

Ocrevus® is infused intravenously (IV - into a vein) at a hospital or clinic i.e. as an outpatient (which will take a few hours). A doctor or nurse or other qualified health professional will monitor you before, during and after your infusion.

The first infusion is 300 mg of Ocrevus® by IV infusion over about 2.5 hours. The second infusion of 300 mg of Ocrevus® by IV infusion will be given two weeks after the first infusion.

Subsequent infusions of 600 mg of Ocrevus® will be given six months after the previous infusion.

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### What are the possible side effects of Ocrevus®?

Ocrevus® helps most people with MS, but it may have unwanted side effects in some people. You may not experience any of them. Tell your doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

Side effects of Ocrevus® may include infusion related reactions. Tell your doctor or nurse immediately if you notice any of the following while receiving an infusion: swelling of the face, lips tongue or throat or other parts of the body, shortness of breath, rash, itching or hives, feeling sick (nausea), fever, cough, tiredness, headaches and dizziness, fast heartbeat. Patients should tell their doctor immediately or go to Accident and Emergency at their nearest hospital if they have any signs or symptoms of an infusion reaction or allergic reaction.

Clinical trials indicated that there may also be a slightly higher risk of some common viral infections such as the common cold.

Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) is a rare, life threatening brain infection caused by the JC virus, which manifests in people whose immune system has been suppressed. Although here were no cases of PML associated with Ocrevus use in clinical trials, PML has been associated with other immunosuppressive medications for MS. Some of the symptoms of PML are similar to MS.

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Your neurologist will assist you to assess the risks and the expected benefit of treatment with Ocrevus® prior to starting therapy and over the course of treatment.

Ocrevus® is not recommended for women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy within the next 6 months or breastfeeding.

The safety and effectiveness of Ocrevus® for people aged under 18 has not been established.

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## How much does Ocrevus® cost?

Ocrevus® has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS) to delay the progression of physical disability and to reduce the frequency of relapse and also for the treatment of patients with primary progressive multiple sclerosis (PPMS) to delay the progression of physical disability.

As Ocrevus® has specific patient management requirements, only neurologists are able to initiate treatment. Your neurologist will need to obtain a special authority (section 100 – ‘Highly Specialised Drugs Program’) to prescribe you with the medication. There are a number of criteria you are required to meet before your neurologist obtains authority to write this prescription.

For details of the criteria required to receive a prescription for Ocrevus® treatment through the PBS, please visit the official PBS website at: <http://www.pbs.gov.au> You will need to click on the red **Authority Required (STREAMLINED)** link.

If you are eligible for medications through the PBS, you will need to pay a contribution fee each time your prescription is dispensed. The Federal Government pays for the remaining cost. The amount of the contribution fee depends upon whether or not you have a pension or concession card. The amount of this fee is set each year by the Federal Government.

Further information about the PBS, your entitlements and details regarding the PBS safety net (which protects patients and their families requiring a large number of PBS items) is available through the Medicare Australia website at: [www.medicare.gov.au](http://www.medicare.gov.au)

Ocrevus® is not available on the PBS for PPMS.

Please consult your neurologist to see if Ocrevus® is the right treatment for you.

Ocrevus® will be available for PPMS patients to purchase privately. You will need to request a quote from your pharmacist for the price of any medication that is not subsidised by the PBS.

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## General information

Generally, the hospital or clinic where you have your Ocrevus® infused will arrange your prescription and order the medication for you.

In Australia, Ocrevus® is supplied by:

**Roche Products Pty Ltd**  
Level 8, 30-34 Hickson Road  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia  
Ph: 02 94549582 or 1800 233 950

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## For more information on MS and other MS treatments

- Speak to your neurologist about what treatment best suits your individual circumstances.
  - MS Nurses can also provide information, training and ongoing support in managing your immunotherapy.
  - For information about MS, MS treatment and to find contact details for your state MS organization visit [www.msaustralia.org.au](http://www.msaustralia.org.au)
  - MS Research Australia provides information on the latest research and clinical trials at [www.msra.org.au](http://www.msra.org.au)
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## References:

1. Ocrevus® Approved Product Information, July 2017  
<https://www.ebs.tga.gov.au/ebs/picmi/picmirepository.nsf/pdf?OpenAgent&id=CP-2017-CMI-02092-1>
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### Note:

MS Australia does not recommend any specific disease-modifying treatment for people living with MS. Decisions about any treatments, taking into consideration the potential benefits and side effects for each individual's circumstances, should be made in careful consultation with the person's neurologist.

The information supplied in this document is collated from material provided by the relevant pharmaceutical company, MIMS (<http://www.mims.com.au>) and MS Research Australia.