MyelomaUK

Daratumumab (Darzalex®)

Treatment Guide

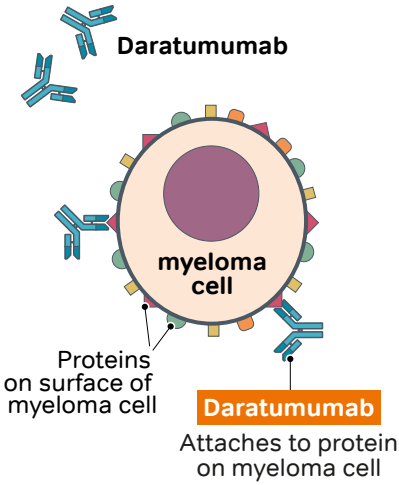
What is daratumumab?

Daratumumab, also known as Darzalex®, is a monoclonal antibody used in the treatment of myeloma.

How does it work?

All cells of the body, including abnormal myeloma cells, have proteins on their surface. Myeloma cells produce a specific protein called CD38. Daratumumab works by attaching to this protein.

When daratumumab attaches to the CD38 protein, it flags the myeloma cell to the immune system. This allows the immune system to target and kill the myeloma cell.



Daratumumab attaching to a specific protein on the myeloma cell. This flags it to the immune system to target and kill the myeloma cell.

How is daratumumab given?

Daratumumab is given as an intravenous infusion (into the vein) or as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous).

Daratumumab can be given in combination with other anti-myeloma treatments.

Daratumumab is usually given once a week for the first 8 weeks. The timing of following doses will vary between treatment plans.

Daratumumab is normally given until your myeloma starts to become more active. Individual treatment plans vary, your healthcare team will discuss your specific plan.

Possible side effects

Daratumumab has a number of possible side effects which can vary from patient to patient. You will experience some side effects, but it is unlikely you will experience all of them, and most side effects will ease once treatment has finished. Always report any side effects to your healthcare team as soon as possible so they can be treated quickly.

The side effects listed here are those experienced most often. For a complete list of side effects please refer to the patient information leaflet which is included in the pack with the treatment. If you do not have this, ask your healthcare team for it.

Myeloma UK provides a wide range of information booklets about side effects and their management. Relevant booklets are signposted beneath each side effect on the following pages.

You can find these along with all of our information booklets online at **myeloma.org.uk/library**.

You can also find out more about the management of these side effects by asking your healthcare team or by contacting Myeloma UK.

0800 980 3332 **AskTheNurse@myeloma.org.uk**

myeloma.org.uk

Infusion reaction (cytokine release syndrome)

This is a very common side effect of daratumumab and usually occurs within 24 hours of the first dose. Symptoms include: chills, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, cough, itchy or runny nose, feeling short of breath and feeling dizzy. You will be given other medicines alongside your daratumumab to reduce the risk of an infusion reaction. However, if you notice any of these side effects, report them to your healthcare team immediately.

Peripheral neuropathy

Daratumumab can cause damage to nerves in the hands, feet, arms or legs. This is called peripheral neuropathy. This causes numbness, tingling and pain, often in the hands or feet. These sensations can be eased with gentle massage, using hot or cold packs and nerve painkillers such as gabapentin and pregabalin. Symptoms generally improve or disappear after the dose of daratumumab is reduced or stopped.

For more information see the **Peripheral neuropathy Infosheet** from Myeloma UK.

Risk of infection

Daratumumab may affect your immune system, increasing your risk of infection. Common signs include: high or low temperature (37.5°C or above, or below 36°C), feeling shivery or cold, passing urine more often or pain when passing urine, and cough or cold symptoms.

Infections can become serious if not treated quickly. Contact your healthcare team or out of hours service immediately if you think you have an infection.

For more information see the **Infection and myeloma Infosheet** from Myeloma UK.

Muscle spasms

You may experience muscle cramps or spasms. Some patients find that keeping well hydrated, stretching and drinking tonic water or sports drinks can help to control the cramps. You may also be prescribed treatment to help with the cramping.

Gut problems

Daratumumab can cause diarrhoea or constipation. Drinking at least 2 litres (3–4 pints) a day and having a balanced diet can help to ease these symptoms. You may also be prescribed laxatives to help you go to the toilet or medicine to reduce any diarrhoea.

For more information see the **Gastrointestinal disturbances Infosheet** from Myeloma UK.

Anaemia and bleeding

Daratumumab can decrease the number of red blood cells, causing anaemia. Symptoms include: looking pale, shortness of breath and fatigue. Daratumumab can also decrease the number of platelets, increasing your risk of bleeding or bruising. Treatment for these side effects can ease symptoms and boost your blood cell counts.

> For more information see the **Fatigue and myeloma Infoguide** and **Thrombocytopenia and myeloma Infosheet** from Myeloma UK.

Fatigue

Fatigue is a feeling of extreme tiredness that is not relieved by sleep. It usually resolves after treatment has finished. Your treatment, any side effects and your mental health can all impact fatigue. Treating any medical causes such as anaemia, can help to manage fatigue. Allowing time for rest, gentle exercise and complementary therapies such as massage may also help.

> For more information see the **Fatigue and myeloma Infoguide** from Myeloma UK.

Headaches

Daratumumab can cause headaches. Try to drink plenty of fluids and speak to your healthcare team about suitable painkillers.

Fluid retention

Daratumumab can cause swelling of the hands, feet or ankles. This is called peripheral oedema. Fluid may also collect around the stomach area making you feel bloated, or in the chest, causing you to feel short of breath. If you are struggling with fluid retention, your healthcare team may prescribe some diuretics (water tablets) to help your body remove the excess fluid.

Important information about daratumumab

Daratumumab can affect the test used to match your blood for blood transfusions. This can last up to 6 months after your final daratumumab treatment. You should have this test done before you start any daratumumab treatment. You should also tell any healthcare professionals that you are having daratumumab treatment.

If you could become pregnant, you should use effective contraception during treatment, and for 3 months after treatment has finished.

It is generally advised that you should not breastfeed when taking daratumumab, as it is not known if it could pass to the milk. You should speak with your healthcare team for more information.

Supplements or herbal medicines that have not been prescribed by your haematologist may cause harm when taken alongside your prescribed treatment.

You must speak to your healthcare team before taking any kind of supplement or alternative treatment, including herbal, traditional or natural medicines and remedies, and vitamins or wellbeing supplements, to ensure it is safe to do so.

If you have any questions about your treatment, speak to your healthcare team. They are the best people to ask if you have questions about your individual situation. The information in this publication is not meant to replace their advice.

MyelomaUK

We're here for everything a diagnosis of myeloma brings

Get in touch to find out more about how we can support you

Call the Myeloma Infoline on
0800 980 3332

Email Ask the Nurse at
AskTheNurse@myeloma.org.uk

Visit our website at
myeloma.org.uk

Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

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We appreciate your feedback

Please fill in a short online survey about our patient information at **myeloma.org.uk/pifeedback** or email any comments to **patientinfo@myeloma.org.uk**

For a list of references used to develop our resources, visit **myeloma.org.uk/references**