

**Rituxan is a biologic therapy that is indicated to treat:**

- moderately to severely active [rheumatoid arthritis](#) (RA) and currently taking methotrexate

### **What Is Rituxan?**

Rituxan (rituximab) is a prescription medication administered for patients via IV infusion.

### **How Rituxan Works**

Rituxan works by targeting immune cells called B-cells. Overactive B-cells are believed to play a role in the symptoms and joint damage of [rheumatoid arthritis](#).

### **What Is Rituxan Used For?**

Doctors order rituximab to treat:

- moderately to severely active [rheumatoid arthritis](#) (RA) and currently taking methotrexate

### **Rituxan Infusion Dosage and Administration**

Patients receive rituximab intravenously. Treatment time for a Rituxan infusion usually lasts 4-6 hours for the first treatment and 2-3 hours for the following treatments.

### **Dosage and Frequency**

Rituxan is administered in “courses”. Each course consists of two 1-gram infusions given two weeks apart. The courses are separated by 6 months for a total of 4 infusions per year.

### **Administering Rituxan via IV Infusion**

1. The nurse prepares the patient’s arm by using rubbing alcohol to sterilize the location that is being used to insert the IV needle.
2. Following needle insertion, the IV line is held in place with tape.
3. The nurse attaches the patient’s IV line to the line coming down from the bag of medication.

Every half-an-hour, the patient’s nurse takes his or her vitals.

### **Rituxan Infusion Side Effects**

As with all medications, [side effects are possible](#).

Common side effects of Rituxan include:

- Infusion-related reactions
- Infections
- Body aches
- Tiredness
- Nausea
- Low white and red blood cell counts
- Swelling
- Diarrhea
- Muscle spasms

Additional more serious side effects include:

- Tumor lysis syndrome
- Serious infections
- Heart problems
- Kidney problems
- Stomach and serious bowel problems
- Severe skin and mouth reactions

### **How To Prepare for a Rituxan Infusion**

It is essential that patients inform their physician if they currently have, or have had, any of the conditions listed below:

- A severe reaction to Rituxan or a rituximab product
- A history of heart problems, irregular heartbeat, or chest pain
- Lung or kidney problems
- A serious or recurring infection
- A weakened immune system
- Any other medical conditions
- Are currently taking any medications, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements

Before treatment, patients should get a good night's sleep. In addition, they need to drink an adequate amount of fluid and eat a meal before their Rituxan IV infusion treatment.

During treatment with Rituxan, patients need to avoid receiving live vaccines.