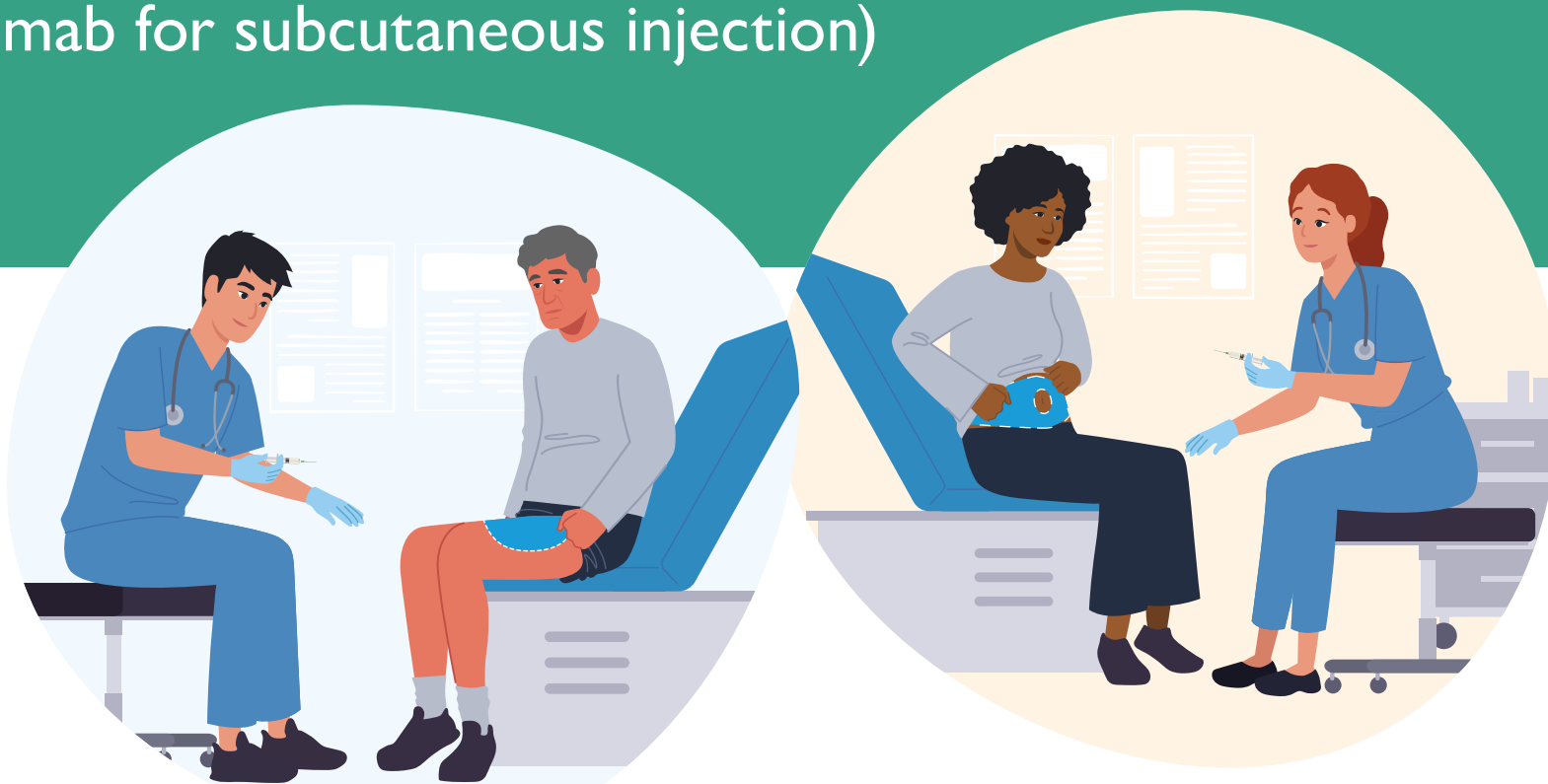


Your treatment with KEYTRUDA SC™ (pembrolizumab for subcutaneous injection)



This treatment support booklet is intended for UK patients prescribed KEYTRUDA SC (pembrolizumab for subcutaneous injection).

This booklet has been developed and funded by MSD. It contains educational information and does not replace the advice of your healthcare professional.

This material is supplementary to the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). Please consult the PIL for full safety information.

If you have any questions about your health or treatment, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Reporting of side effects: If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the **Patient Information Leaflet (PIL)**. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk> or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

Your treatment with pembrolizumab SC

You received this booklet because your doctor has prescribed you the subcutaneous (under the skin) form of pembrolizumab, also known as pembrolizumab SC, to treat your cancer.



This booklet includes information on:

- How pembrolizumab SC works and how it is given
- What you should expect during and after your pembrolizumab SC injection
- What you should look out for, including some possible side effect symptoms
- FAQs

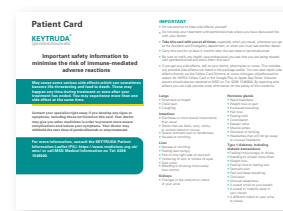
Your healthcare professional will talk to you about how pembrolizumab SC will be used to treat your cancer and the potential side effects you might experience.

What you need to remember

Your healthcare team should have provided you with materials to help you understand your treatment with pembrolizumab SC and identify possible side effects you may experience during your treatment. This booklet is designed to support this information.

Tell your healthcare professional (doctor, pharmacist or nurse) immediately about any changes to how you are feeling. Do not attempt to diagnose or treat side effects yourself.

Reporting side effects early may stop them from becoming more serious and can make them easier to treat. Side effects do not necessarily mean you have to come off treatment permanently, and your healthcare professional will be able to support you in managing them.



Carry your **Patient Card** with you at all times and let any healthcare professional involved in any aspect of your healthcare know that you are being treated with pembrolizumab SC.

Ensure you read the **Patient Information Leaflet (PIL)**.

If your healthcare professional has prescribed you the **395 mg dose** of pembrolizumab every three weeks, [click here](#) to access the PIL.

If your healthcare professional has prescribed you the **790 mg dose** of pembrolizumab every six weeks, [click here](#) to access the PIL.

These links will direct you to a third-party website.

What is pembrolizumab SC and how does it work?

Pembrolizumab is an immunotherapy that works with your body's immune system by increasing its ability to recognise and fight cancer cells.^{1,2}

There are two forms of pembrolizumab currently available for the treatment of certain types of cancer and your doctor will discuss which is right for you.



One form, given as an infusion into the vein, is known as pembrolizumab IV (intravenous).²



The other form, given as an injection under the skin, is known as pembrolizumab SC (subcutaneous).¹

Pembrolizumab SC also includes an enzyme (substance), which helps your body absorb the medicine when injected under the skin.^{1,3}

A clinical trial found that the amount of medicine reaching the bloodstream was not worse whether pembrolizumab was given as an injection under the skin (SC) or as an infusion into a vein (IV). The clinical trial also observed that pembrolizumab SC works just as well as pembrolizumab IV at fighting cancer.³

Pembrolizumab SC is used to treat many different types of cancer and may be given on its own or in combination with other anticancer medicines, with or without radiation therapy.¹ For a full list of the cancers that pembrolizumab SC is approved to treat, please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL).

How pembrolizumab SC is given



Pembrolizumab SC will be given to you by your healthcare professional.

You will receive an injection into the fatty layer under the skin of your tummy (avoiding the 5 cm area around the belly button), or into your thigh. This will be given to you **once every 3 weeks or once every 6 weeks**, depending on the dose your doctor has prescribed.¹

Please note, pembrolizumab SC can be injected either into the tummy or the thigh. This image is a representative example only.



If your prescribed dose of pembrolizumab SC is once **every 3 weeks**, it will be injected **over 1 minute**.¹



If your prescribed dose of pembrolizumab SC is once **every 6 weeks**, it will be injected **over 2 minutes**.¹

Please note that this time only reflects the injection administration time, it does not reflect the time that you will spend in the clinic.

Your healthcare professional will decide the treatment schedule that is right for you and how long your treatment will last.

Pembrolizumab SC does not require a port (a small chamber that sits under the skin and goes into a vein which delivers medicine into your body) because it is not given into a vein.^{1,4} However, some patients may still need a port if their treatment plan includes another treatment, such as chemotherapy.⁴

Preparing for your pembrolizumab injection appointment



You should arrange transportation to and from your appointment. You may wish to ask a family member or friend to come with you to help take notes and remember things your healthcare team has told you.



Wear clothing that allows for easy access to the injection site, for example, shorts or a skirt and a loose-fitting shirt.



Avoid applying lotion to your tummy or thighs so that your skin is clean and prepared for your injection.



Prepare a list of questions you may have for your healthcare professional. Also, prepare a list of any medications or supplements which you are taking, and any known allergies you may have.

Your healthcare team will be there to support you and answer any questions you may have during your appointment.

During your pembrolizumab injection appointment

Before your pembrolizumab injection

Tell your healthcare professional about all medicines you are taking, including:

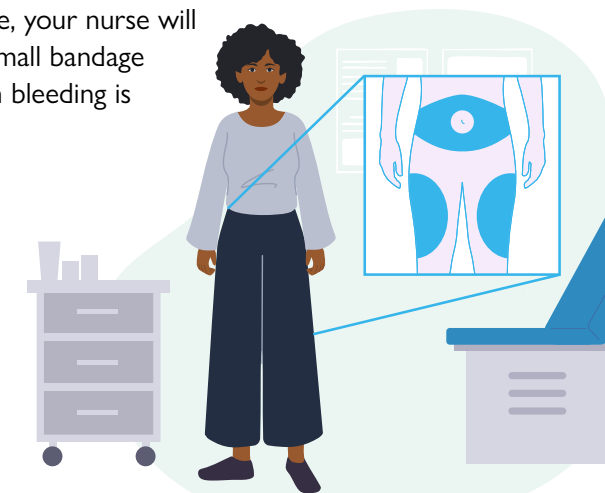
- Prescription medicines and any recent injections or vaccinations
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Any vitamins or herbal supplements

Also tell your healthcare professional if you are feeling unwell or have felt unwell recently, and if you have any known allergies.

Receiving your pembrolizumab injection¹

You will be asked by your healthcare professional to sit or lie down comfortably. Taking deep breaths may help you stay relaxed during your appointment.

- 1.** Your nurse will clean the injection area. This will be either your tummy or your thigh.
Your nurse will not give you the injection in areas where your skin is damaged, sore, bruised, scarred, scaly or has red patches.
- 2.** Your nurse will then give you the pembrolizumab SC injection under the skin. This will take 1 or 2 minutes, depending on your prescribed dose. Try to remain still for the duration of the injection.
- 3.** When the injection is complete, your nurse will place cotton or gauze with a small bandage on your injection site, although bleeding is likely to be minimal.



After your pembrolizumab injection appointment

Injection sites need to be rotated. It may be helpful to note which area you had your injection in, as your nurse will alternate the injection site next time.

You may be asked to stay for a short time after your injection so your healthcare team can make sure you are feeling well before you leave and assess whether you have had any reactions. Tell your healthcare professional immediately if you feel unwell or different in any way.

You may feel stinging or pressure at your injection site. This is normal and usually settles quickly.

Approximately 2.4% of people receiving pembrolizumab SC may experience mild reactions at the site of injection, such as:³

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling
- Tenderness

These reactions may resolve on their own within a few days, however if they continue or cause you any concern or discomfort, contact your healthcare professional.

Potential side effects of pembrolizumab SC¹

Like all medicines, pembrolizumab SC can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Your healthcare professional has prescribed you pembrolizumab SC because they believe that the potential benefits of the treatment outweigh the possible risk of side effects. Your healthcare team will tell you what symptoms to look out for and how side effects are managed.

Pembrolizumab SC acts on your immune system, which means it may cause inflammation in parts of your body. Your risk of side effects may be higher if you already have an autoimmune disease (a condition where the body attacks its own cells). You may also experience frequent flares of your autoimmune disease, which in the majority of cases are mild.

For a full list of side effects, please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). Side effects can happen at anytime during treatment or even after your treatment is finished. You may not experience any side effects or you may experience more than one side effect at the same time. However, familiarising yourself with the side effects can help you identify them so that you can report them to your healthcare professional.



It is important that you tell your healthcare professional if you experience any symptoms, even if they seem mild at first.

Do not attempt to diagnose or treat side effects yourself by taking medication without first consulting a healthcare professional. Reporting side effects early may stop them from becoming more serious and can make them potentially easier to treat. If left untreated, some side effects may become life-threatening.

Potential side effect symptoms¹



If you experience any of the symptoms listed on these pages, call or see your healthcare professional right away.

The list of symptoms on these pages is not exhaustive, so if you experience different symptoms to those listed make a note of them in the space provided and speak to your healthcare professional. Please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) for the full list of side effects you may experience with pembrolizumab SC.



SKIN AND HAIR

- Changes in skin colour, including yellowing
- Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal
- Increased sweating or sweat with a different odour than usual
- Hair loss
- Rash, itching, blistering, peeling or sores on the skin
- Ulcers in the mouth or in the lining of the nose, throat, or genital area



MUSCLES, NERVES, JOINTS AND LIMBS

- Muscle aches, cramps or spasms
- Muscle pain or weakness
- Pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness in the arms or legs



GENERAL

- Changes in weight
- Feeling colder than usual
- Deepening of the voice
- Feeling tired, fatigued, weak or unusual sleepiness
- Feeling sick
- Confusion or memory problems
- Fever
- Changes in appetite

EYES

- Yellowing of the whites of the eyes
- Changes in eyesight



MOUTH AND HEAD

- Dizziness or fainting
- Headaches that will not go away or are unusual
- Feeling more thirsty than usual
- Sweet smell to breath
- Sweet or metallic taste in the mouth
- Seizures



THROAT AND CHEST

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Cough
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Fast, deep breathing



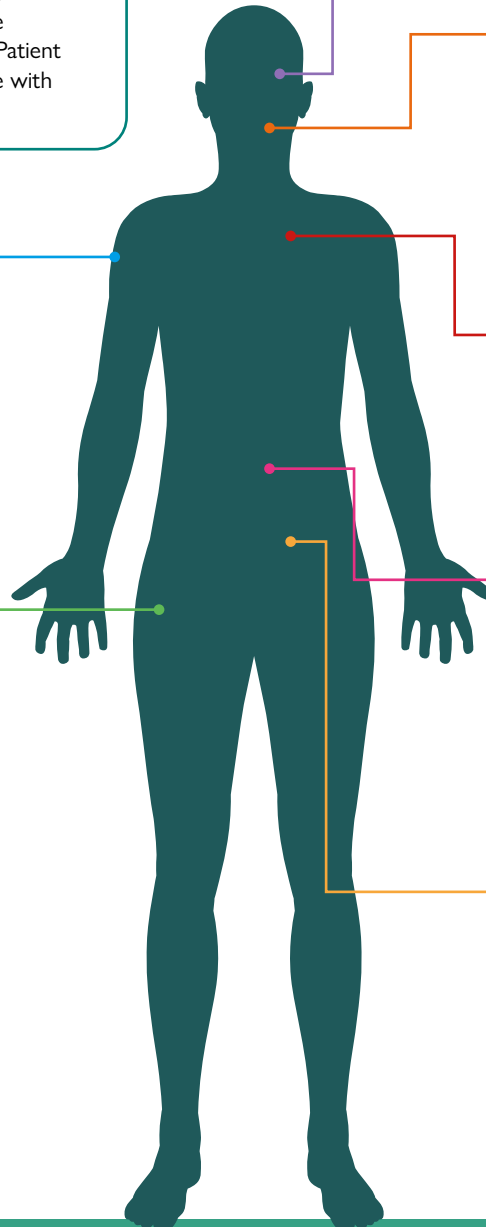
STOMACH AND BOWELS

- Constipation, diarrhoea or more frequent bowel movements than usual
- Black, tarry, sticky stools or stools with blood or mucus
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain or tenderness in the abdomen or stomach, or pain in the right side or upper right part of the stomach



URINE

- Changes in the amount, frequency, colour, or odour of urine
- Loss of bladder control or difficulty passing urine



Frequently asked questions

This section provides answers to some of the questions you might have about your treatment. It is a good idea to make note of any other questions you may have and discuss them with your healthcare professional.

Does pembrolizumab SC work as well as pembrolizumab IV?

A clinical trial showed that pembrolizumab SC works in a similar way to pembrolizumab IV at fighting your cancer. The trial also showed that side effects occurred at a similar rate with both pembrolizumab SC and pembrolizumab IV.³

If I have already started treatment with pembrolizumab SC, can I ask my healthcare professional to switch to pembrolizumab IV?

Your healthcare professional can help you decide if switching from pembrolizumab SC to pembrolizumab IV is right for you at any time during your treatment.

What happens if I miss a dose or cannot attend my appointment?

Call your healthcare professional right away to reschedule your appointment.

How long will my injection appointments take?

Your healthcare professional will tell you how long each appointment will take. Pembrolizumab SC takes between 1 and 2 minutes to inject, depending on the dose, but this does not include other aspects of the appointment.¹ It is important to give yourself plenty of time for your appointment, as your healthcare professional may ask you questions or conduct additional checks before and after your injection.

What effect will pembrolizumab have on my other medicines?

Your treatment may interact with other medicines. It is important to tell your healthcare professional about any medicines you are currently taking or planning to take.

Can I take antibiotics?

It is important to ensure that any medications you take are compatible with pembrolizumab. Ensure your healthcare professional is aware of any treatments you are currently taking or planning to take.

Can I take vitamins and herbal supplements?

You should tell your healthcare professional about any medicines you are currently taking or planning to take, including vitamins and herbal supplements. Your healthcare professional can help you decide if they are suitable to take or not.

Can I have vaccinations?

Consult your healthcare professional before receiving any vaccinations, including the flu vaccination.

Can I go on holiday?

Discuss your holiday plans with your healthcare professional before you book your holiday. Some extra preparation may be necessary, and you should always carry your Patient Card with you when you travel.

Should I change my diet?

Cancer and cancer treatment can be affected by your diet, so a healthy diet is important.⁵ You can discuss any changes to your diet with your healthcare professional.

Notes

Can I drink alcohol?

Alcohol consumption should be kept to a minimum when taking pembrolizumab. You can discuss this with your healthcare professional.

Can I exercise?

Please discuss with your healthcare professional before starting any new form of exercise or changing your current levels of exercise.

Should I use contraception?

You must not use pembrolizumab if you are pregnant, unless a doctor specifically recommends it. If you are able to become pregnant, you should use an effective method of contraception during your treatment and for at least 4 months after your last dose of pembrolizumab.¹ Talk to your healthcare professional about contraception methods that you can use during this time and tell your healthcare professional right away if you become pregnant during treatment. Please see the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) for further information.

Can I breastfeed?

You should not breastfeed during your treatment. It is not known if pembrolizumab passes into breast milk, so a risk to your baby cannot be excluded.¹ Please speak to your healthcare professional for further guidance if you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed before starting treatment.

Can I drive and/or operate machinery?

You may feel dizzy, tired or weak while taking pembrolizumab which can affect your ability to drive or use tools or machines.¹ Do not drive or use machines unless you are sure you are feeling well.

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Important contact details

My details

Name:

Telephone:

Mobile:

My GP details

Name of GP:

Name of surgery:

Surgery telephone:

My hospital details

Hospital name:

Consultant name:

Specialist nurse name:

Hospital telephone:

Acute Oncology Service (AOS) telephone:

My main healthcare team contact

Name of main contact:

Telephone:

Alternatively, you can place a sticker with your hospital's details over this section.

Please read the **Patient Information Leaflet (PIL)** for the full information about pembrolizumab SC and its side effects.

If your healthcare professional has prescribed you the **395 mg dose** of pembrolizumab every three weeks, [click here](#) to access the PIL.

If your healthcare professional has prescribed you the **790 mg dose** of pembrolizumab every six weeks, [click here](#) to access the PIL.

These links will direct you to a third-party website.

Your healthcare team is your main source of information and support throughout treatment. Do not hesitate to contact them if you have questions or feel unwell at any point.



References

1. KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) SC Patient Information Leaflet. Available at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.101749.pdf>.
2. KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) IV Patient Information Leaflet. Available at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.2498.pdf>.
3. Felip E, et al. *Ann Oncol.* 2025;36(7):775-785.
4. Cancer Research UK. Portacaths. Available at: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/treatment/chemotherapy/how-you-have/into-your-vein/portacath>.
5. Cancer Research UK. Why diet is important. Available at: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/diet-problems/why-diet-is-important>.