

TOFACITINIB TREATMENT

What is tofacitinib (aka Xeljanz)?

Tofacitinib is a medication taken by mouth which is used to treat severe hair loss from alopecia areata. It is **not approved** by Health Canada for use in children, but has been studied and found to be effective in alopecia areata in children as young as 4 years of age.

Practical things to know about taking tofacitinib

- Tofacitinib is taken **twice a day** by mouth (5 mg or 10 mg twice a day). Before starting tofacitinib, you will have bloodwork done. This includes a full blood count (CBC) and liver tests (AST, ALT, hepatitis screening). This is repeated in 1 month.
- You will also need to have a negative TB test
- You can take with or without food
- It is best if you are fully immunized before starting tofacitinib
- Many patients notice some results by 3 months of treatment

Side-effects of tofacitinib

- Most patients do well with tofacitinib
- Some patients develop acne (and this is treatable)
- You have a slightly higher risk of infection when you are on tofacitinib
- In adults with rheumatoid arthritis, we worry about blood clots, heart issues and malignancy but this is not something we see in children.

Important things to know about taking tofacitinib

- Let your doctor know if you start any new medications while on tofacitinib.
- Some medications can increase the levels of tofacitinib. These include oral anti fungal medications (ketoconazole, fluconazole) and other immunosuppressants (tacrolimus, cyclosporine)
- Some medications decrease the levels of tofacitinib like an antibiotic called rifampin
- Grapefruit juice and St. John's wort should be avoided, as they can interfere with levels of tofacitinib
- Notify your physician at once if an accidental overdose occurs