

UPADACITINIB TREATMENT

What is upadacitinib?

Upadacitinib is a medication taken by mouth which is used to treat severe eczema (atopic dermatitis). It is approved by Health Canada for adolescents who are 12 years and older who are over 40 kg. It is also used for adult eczema, rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis.

Practical things to know about taking upadacitinib

- Upadacitinib is taken **once a day** by mouth
- Before starting upadacitinib, you will have bloodwork done. This includes a full blood count (CBC), liver enzyme tests (AST, ALT) and lipid testing (eg cholesterol). This is repeated in 3 months.
- You will also need to have a negative TB test.
- It is best if you are fully immunized before starting upadacitinib.

Side-effects of upadacitinib

- Most patients do well with upadacitinib
- You have a higher risk of herpes infection (blisters on the skin)
- You also have a slightly higher risk of infection when you are on upadacitinib
- Some patients also have worsening of acne
- Other side-effects include tummy pain and nausea
- Some blood levels can go up (cholesterol, triglycerides, liver enzymes) or down (neutrophil or lymphocyte count). These do not cause any symptoms and will be tested for in the bloodwork
- Rarely, upadacitinib can cause blood clots

Important things to know about taking upadacitinib

- Let your doctor know if you start any new medications while on upadacitinib. For example, you need to avoid some fungal medications (ketoconazole, itraconazole), seizure medications (phenytoin) and some antibiotics (clarithromycin, rifampin). Food like grapefruit and herbal medications like St. John's Wort can also affect the dose (and should be avoided).
- Do not miss appointments or blood tests
- Notify your physician at once if an accidental overdose occurs
- Upadacitinib seems to work pretty fast, and you should notice an improvement in the first few weeks
- You can continue using your eczema ointments and creams while you are taking upadacitinib