



Etanercept for Poststroke Disability

This information sheet is provided to help you understand the use of etanercept for treating poststroke disability. This sheet is a service of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN).

The AAN is the world's largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals. Neurologists are doctors who identify and treat diseases of the brain and nervous system. The AAN is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care.

Experts from the AAN carefully reviewed the available scientific studies on treating poststroke disability with etanercept. The following information is based on evidence from those studies and other key information. The information summarizes the main findings of the 2016 AAN practice advisory on treating poststroke disability with etanercept. This practice advisory was published in *Neurology*® online on June 6, 2016. It appears in the June 7, 2016, *Neurology* print issue.

To read the full practice advisory, visit AAN.com/guidelines.

What disabilities can happen after a stroke?

Stroke is a leading cause of major disability. A stroke happens when the blood flow to the brain is reduced or interrupted. The brain does not receive the oxygen and nutrients it needs, and within minutes, brain cells start to die.

Poststroke disability can be presented in many ways:

- Loss of the ability to move or problems controlling body movement
- Poor balance
- Problems speaking or understanding language
- Difficulty with thinking and remembering
- Sensory problems (such as seeing, smelling, hearing)
- Emotional troubles

What is etanercept?

Etanercept is a drug given by injection that has US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for the treatment of conditions such as:

- Arthritis (inflammation of joints)
- Spondylitis (inflammation affecting the spine)
- Psoriasis (scaly, itchy patches of dry skin)

Etanercept is also used, without FDA approval, in the treatment of poststroke disability.

Is etanercept safe and effective for treating poststroke disability? What does the evidence show?

There is not enough evidence to show if etanercept is effective or safe for treating poststroke disability. This conclusion is based on very low evidence* and existing medical knowledge. Etanercept for treating disability after a stroke has not been evaluated sufficiently in well-designed studies.

Before beginning therapy, patients and their families should discuss the use of etanercept with their doctors. Treatment with this drug for nonapproved use may be associated with serious side effects. Be sure to weigh the risks and benefits carefully.

This statement is provided as an educational service of the American Academy of Neurology. It is based on an assessment of current scientific and clinical information. It is not intended to include all possible proper methods of care for a particular neurologic problem or all legitimate criteria for choosing to use a specific procedure. Neither is it intended to exclude any reasonable alternative methodologies. The AAN recognizes that specific patient care decisions are the prerogative of the patient and the physician caring for the patient, based on all of the circumstances involved.

*After the experts review all of the published research studies, they describe the strength of the evidence supporting each recommendation:

Strong evidence = Future studies very unlikely to change the conclusion

Moderate evidence = Future studies unlikely to change the conclusion

Low evidence = Future studies likely to change the conclusion

Very low evidence = Future studies very likely to change the conclusion

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