SCHEDULING STATUS

S4

PROPRIETARY NAME, STRENGTH AND PHARMACEUTICAL FORM

ABITREXATE 2,5 mg TABLETS

ABITREXATE 10 mg Tablets

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking ABITREXATE

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have further questions, please ask your doctor or your pharmacist.
- **ABITREXATE** has been prescribed for you personally and you should not share your medicine with other people. It may harm them, even if their symptoms are the same as yours.

1. WHAT ABITREXATE CONTAINS

Active ingredient:

ABITREXATE 2,5 mg TABLETS contain 2,5 mg of methotrexate as the sodium salt.

ABITREXATE 10 mg tablets contain 10 mg of methotrexate as the sodium salt.

Inactive ingredients:

Tablets: Microcrystalline cellulose PH102, potato starch, magnesium stearate, lactose monohydrate and colloidal silicon dioxide.

2. WHAT ABITREXATE IS USED FOR

Methotrexate belongs to the group of medicines known as antimetabolites. It is used to treat some kinds of cancer. It may also be used for other conditions as determined by your doctor, such as severe psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Methotrexate blocks an enzyme needed by the cell to live. This interferes with the growth of cancer

cells, which are eventually destroyed. Since the growth of normal body cells may also be affected by methotrexate, other effects will also occur. Some of these may be serious and must be reported to your doctor. Other effects, like hair loss, may not be serious but may cause concern. Some effects may not occur for months or years after the medicine is used.

Before you begin treatment with methotrexate, you and your doctor should talk about the good this medicine will do as well as the risk of using it.

Methotrexate is available only with your doctor's prescription.

3. BEFORE YOU TAKE ABITREXATE

Allergies:

Tell your doctor if you have ever had any unusual or allergic reaction to methotrexate. Also tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to any other substances, such as foods, preservatives, or dyes.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding your baby, please consult your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professional for advice before taking this medicine.

Pregnancy:

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or if you intend to have children. There is a good chance that this medicine may cause birth defects if either the male or female is taking it at the time of conception or if it is taken during pregnancy. Methotrexate may cause harm or even death of the fetus. In addition, many cancer medicines may cause sterility which could be permanent. Although sterility is probably rare with this medicine, the possibility should be kept in mind.

Be sure that you have discussed this with your doctor before taking this medicine. It is best to use some kind of birth control while you are taking methotrexate. However, do not use oral contraceptives ("the pill") since they may interfere with this medicine. Tell your doctor right away if you think you have become pregnant while taking methotrexate.

Breastfeeding:

Tell your doctor if you are breastfeeding or if you intend to breastfeed during treatment with this medicine. Because **ABITREXATE** may cause serious side effects, breastfeeding is generally not recommended while you are taking it.

Other medicines:

Always tell your healthcare professional if you are taking any other medicine.

(This includes complementary or traditional medicines.)

Although certain medicines should not be used together at all, in other cases two different medicines may be used together even if an interaction might occur. In these cases, your doctor may want to change the dose, or other precautions may be necessary. When you are taking **ABITREXATE**, it is especially important that your doctor and pharmacist know you are taking any other prescription or nonprescription (over the counter) medicine. They should also be told if you have ever been treated with x-rays or cancer medicine or if you drink alcohol.

Other medical problems:

The presence of other medical problems may affect the use of **ABITREXATE**. Make sure you tell your doctor of any other medical problems especially:

- Alcohol abuse (or history of) – increased risk of unwanted effects on the liver
- Chickenpox (including recent exposure) or
- Herpes zoster (shingles) – risk of severe disease affecting other parts of the body
- Colitis
- Disease of the immune system
- Gout (history of) or kidney stones (or history of) – methoxtrexate may increase levels of a chemical called uric acid in the body, which can cause gout or kidney stones.
- Infection – methotrexate can reduce immunity to infection
- Intestine blockage or
- Kidney disease or
- Liver disease – effects may be increased because of slower removal of methotrexate from the body
- Mouth sores or inflammation or
- Stomach ulcer – may be worsened.

Other precautions:

It is very important that your doctor check your progress at regular visits to make sure that this medicine is working properly and to check for unwanted effects. It is also essential that examinations of blood and tests of kidney and liver function should be made before, during and after each course of treatment with **ABITREXATE**.

Do not drink alcohol while using this medicine. Alcohol can increase the chance of liver problems.

Some patients who take **ABITREXATE** may become more sensitive to sunlight than they are normally. When you first begin taking **ABITREXATE** avoid too much sun and do not use a sunlamp until you see how you react to the sun, especially if you tend to burn easily. In case of a severe burn, check with your doctor.

Do not take medicine for inflammation or pain (aspirin or other salicylates, diclofenac, ibuprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, mefenamic, indomethacin acid, naproxen, phenylbutazone, piroxicam, sulindac, tolmentin, etc.) without first checking with your doctor. These medicines may increase the effects of **ABITREXATE**, which could be harmful.

While you are being treated with **ABITREXATE**, and after you stop treatment with it, do not have any immunizations (vaccinations) without your doctor's approval.

ABITREXATE may lower your body's resistance and there is a chance you might get the infection the immunization is meant to prevent. In addition, other persons living in your household should not take or should not have recently taken oral polio vaccine since there is a chance they could pass the polio virus to you. Also avoid other persons who have taken oral polio vaccine. Do not get close to them, and do not stay in the same room with them for very long. If you cannot take these precautions, you should consider wearing a protective facemask that covers the nose and mouth.

ABITREXATE can lower the number of white blood cells in your blood temporarily, increasing the chance of getting an infection. It can also lower the number of platelets, which are necessary for proper blood clotting. If this occurs, there are certain precautions you can take, especially when your blood count is low, to reduce the risk of infection or bleeding.

- If you can, avoid people with infections. Check with your doctor immediately if you think you are getting an infection or if you get a fever or chills, cough or hoarseness, lower back or side pain, or painful or difficult urination.
- Check with your doctor immediately if you notice any unusual bleeding or bruising; black, tarry stools; blood in urine or stools; or pinpoint red spots on your skin.
- Be careful when using a regular toothbrush, dental floss, or toothpick. Your medical doctor,

dentist, or nurse may recommend other ways to clean your teeth and gums. Check with your medical doctor before having any dental work done.

- Do not touch your eyes or the inside of your nose unless you have just washed your hands and have not touched anything else in the meantime.
- Be careful not to cut yourself when you are using sharp objects such as a safety razor or fingernail or toenail cutters.
- Avoid contact sports or other situations where bruising or injury could occur.

4. HOW TO TAKE ABITREXATE

Do not share medicines prescribed for you with any other person.

Always take **ABITREXATE** exactly as your doctor has instructed you. You should check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure.

Dosage:

ABITREXATE may be given by mouth. **ABITREXATE** should be administered under the supervision of a medical doctor experienced in the use of chemotherapeutic agents. The exact amount of medicine has been carefully worked out. Taking too much may increase the chance of side effects, while taking too little may not improve your condition.

ABITREXATE is often given together with certain other medicines. If you are using a combination of medicines, make sure that you take each one at the proper time and do not mix them. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to help you plan a way to remember to take your medicines at the right times.

While you are using **ABITREXATE**, your doctor may want you to drink extra fluids so that you will pass more urine. This will help the drug pass from the body, and will prevent kidney problems and keep your kidneys working well.

ABITREXATE commonly causes nausea and vomiting. Even if you begin to feel ill, do not stop using this medicine without first checking with your doctor. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for ways to lessen these effects.

If you vomit shortly after taking a dose of **ABITREXATE**, check with your doctor. You will be told whether to take the dose again or to wait until the next scheduled dose.

Missed dose:

If you miss a dose of this medicine do not take the missed dose at all and do not double the next one. Instead go back to your regular dosing schedule and check with your doctor.

If you take more ABITREXATE than you should:

In the event of overdosage, consult your doctor or pharmacist. If neither is available, contact the nearest hospital or poison control centre.

Your doctor will tell you how long your treatment with **ABITREXATE** will last.
If you have the impression that the effect of **ABITREXATE** is too strong or too weak, tell your doctor or pharmacist.

5. POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

ABITREXATE can have side effects.

Not all side effects reported for **ABITREXATE** are included in this leaflet. Should your general health worsen or if you experience any untoward effects while taking **ABITREXATE**, please consult your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professional for advice.

Along with their effects, medicines like **ABITREXATE** can sometimes cause unwanted effects such as blood problems, kidney problems, stomach or liver problems, loss of hair, and other side effects. These and other side-effects are described below. Also because of the way these medicines act on the body, there is a chance that they might cause other unwanted effects that may not occur until months or years after the medicine is used. These delayed effects may include certain types of cancer, such as leukemia. Discuss these possible effects with your doctor.

The undesirable effects with **ABITREXATE** are summarized by organ system.
Although not all of these side effects may occur, if they do occur they may need medical attention.

Gastrointestinal disorders:

Frequent:	Inflammation of the gums, sores in the mouth and on the lips, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dark tarry stools, gastro-intestinal ulceration, bleeding and enteritis.

Blood disorders:

Frequent: Abnormally small number of red blood cells, white blood cells or platelets in the blood.

Liver Disorders:

Less frequent: **ABITREXATE** may cause acute (increase in liver enzymes) or chronic (fibrosis and cirrhosis) liver damage or toxicity. Chronic toxicity is potentially lethal.

Nervous system disorders:

Less frequent: Headache, drowsiness, blurred vision, language disorders, muscular weakness or paralysis and convulsions have been reported after **ABITREXATE** administration. Toxic side-effects have occurred after the intrathecal administration of **ABITREXATE**.

Respiratory (Pulmonary) disorders:

Less frequent: Potentially fatal inflammation of the lungs has been reported and obstructive lung disease has occurred. Symptoms of **ABITREXATE** induced lung disease may typically show fever, cough, shortness of breath, oxygen deficiency and infiltration in lung radiography.

Urogenital disorders:

Frequent: Serious kidney disease or impaired kidney function, bladder inflammation, blood in the urine, defective formation of the egg (ovum) or sperm, menstrual dysfunction and vaginal discharge, infertility, abortion, foetal deviations, suppression of sperm formation, loss of libido, and impotence may occur.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders:

Less frequent: Skin rash or itching, reddening of the skin, depigmentation, bruising, acne, boils and increased sensitivity to sunlight or UV rays. Psoriatric lesions may worsen by exposure to UV-radiation.

Other disorders:

Less frequent: Joint or muscle pain, diabetes, osteoporosis, opportunistic infections, inflammation of blood vessels, allergic reactions and sudden death have been reported.

If you notice any side effects not mentioned in this leaflet, please inform your doctor or pharmacist.

6. STORING AND DISPOSING OF ABITREXATE

Tablets: Store at or below 25 °C in well-closed containers and protect from light. Do not remove the blisters from the carton until required for use.

Do not store in bathroom, near the kitchen sink, or in other damp places. Heat or moisture may cause the medicine to break down.

Do not keep outdated or medicines no longer needed. Be sure that any discarded medicine is out of the reach of children.

Store all medicines out of reach of children.

Return all unused medicine to your pharmacist.

Do not dispose of unused medicine in drains or sewerage systems (e.g. toilets).

7. PRESENTATION OF ABITREXATE

ABITREXATE tablets are available in blister strips containing 10 tablets.

ABITREXATE tablets are available in grey polypropylene bottles with white pilferproof closures. Each bottle contains 30 and 100 tablets.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF ABITREXATE

ABITREXATE 2,5 mg TABLETS are flat-faced, yellow, bevel-edged and scored with a diameter of 6,5 mm, code MTX2 ½ on one side, PCH on the other side.

ABITREXATE 10 mg tablets are flat-faced, yellow, bevel-edged and scored with a diameter of 9 mm code MTX10 on one side.

9. REGISTRATION NUMBERS

ABITREXATE 2,5 mg TABLETS: 37/26/0466

ABITREXATE 10 mg: S/26/0338

10. NAME AND ADDRESS OF REGISTRATION HOLDER

Teva Pharmaceuticals (Pty) Ltd

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