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2. Apremilast

Apremilast

Generic name: apremilast [*a-PRE-mi-last*]**Brand name:** [Otezla](#)**Dosage form:** oral tablet (10 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg)**Drug class:** [Antirheumatics](#)Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Oct 2, 2024.[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Cost](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is apremilast?

Apremilast ([Otezla](#)) is used to treat [plaque psoriasis](#), [psoriatic arthritis](#), and [Behçet's disease](#) in specific patients. Apremilast tablets help improve plaque psoriasis for clearer skin and reduce inflammation and symptoms such as pain, redness, and swelling in psoriatic arthritis and Behcet's disease.

Apremilast is a PDE4 inhibitor that works by increasing the level of cAMP (cyclic adenosine monophosphate), a messenger involved in cell signaling in our bodies. Apremilast is not a biologic agent.

Apremilast, under the brand name Otezla, received FDA approval on March 21, 2014, for psoriatic arthritis. Since then, it has also been FDA-approved to treat types of plaque psoriasis and Behcet's disease in specific patients. It is not available as a generic medicine.

What is Apremilast used for?

- **Plaque Psoriasis:** Adult patients with plaque psoriasis who require systemic therapy or light treatment (phototherapy). Pediatric patients 6 years of age and older and weighing at least 20 kg with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis who are candidates for phototherapy or systemic therapy.
- **Psoriatic Arthritis:** Treatment for adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis.
- **Oral Ulcers Associated with Behçet's Disease:** Treatment for adult patients with oral ulcers associated with Behçet's Disease (a disease causing inflammation in blood vessels).

Warnings

Some people have thoughts about suicide while taking apremilast. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use apremilast if you are allergic to it.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- kidney disease; or
- [depression](#) or suicidal thoughts or actions.

Some people have thoughts about suicide while taking apremilast. Your doctor will need to check your progress at regular visits. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.

Apremilast may harm an unborn baby. Use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy, and tell your doctor if you become pregnant.

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry to track the effects of apremilast on the baby.

It may not be safe to breastfeed while using this medicine. Ask your doctor about any risk.

Apremilast is not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

 [Apremilast pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

What is the cost of apremilast?

Apremilast (Otezla brand) cost will depend on your insurance plan and which pharmacy you use.

Otezla coupon or an Otezla savings card may be available that you could be eligible for. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you qualify, or click on this link for [Otezla Coupons](#) and our price guide.

How should I take apremilast?

Take apremilast exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

You may take apremilast with or without food.

Swallow the tablet whole, and do not crush, chew, or break it.

Keep track of your body weight while you are taking this medicine, and tell your doctor about any major [weight loss](#).

Store at room temperature, away from moisture and heat.

 [Apremilast patient tips](#) (more detail)

Dosing information

Usual Adult Apremilast Dose for Psoriatic Arthritis, Plaque Psoriasis, and Behcet's disease

Adults Starting dose:

- Day 1: 10 mg once a day in the morning

- Day 2: 10 mg twice a day (morning and evening)
- Day 3: 10 mg in the morning and 20 mg in the evening
- Day 4: 20 mg twice a day (morning and evening)
- Day 5: 20 mg in the morning and 30 mg in the evening, then maintenance dose.

Maintenance dose:

- 30 mg orally twice a day (morning and evening)

Usual Apremilast Dose Pediatric Patients with Moderate to Severe Plaque Psoriasis who are 6 Years of Age and Older and Weighing at Least 20kg.

Pediatric Patients 20kg to less than 50 kg:

- Day 1: 10 mg once a day in the morning
- Day 2: 10 mg twice a day (morning and evening)
- Day 3: 10 mg in the morning and 20 mg in the evening
- Day 4: 20 mg twice a day (morning and evening), then maintenance dose.

Maintenance dose:

- 20 mg twice a day (morning and evening)

Pediatric Patients 50 kg or more:

- Day 1: 10 mg once a day in the morning
- Day 2: 10 mg twice a day (morning and evening)
- Day 3: 10 mg in the morning and 20 mg in the evening
- Day 4: 20 mg twice a day (morning and evening)
- Day 5: 20 mg in the morning and 30 mg in the evening then maintenance dose.

Maintenance dose:

- 30 mg orally twice a day (morning and evening)

General Dosing Comments

Keep track of your body weight while you are taking this medicine, and tell your doctor about any major weight loss.

Dosage adjustments are required in renal impairment.

Apremilast usually begins at a low dose that is increased over 5 days to the maintenance dose, this is to reduce gastrointestinal symptoms that may happen when you first start taking this medicine. You may be given your medicine in a starter pack containing tablets that have different strengths; it is important to follow your doctor's instructions carefully.

 [Detailed Apremilast dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking apremilast?

Follow your doctor's instructions about any restrictions on food, beverages, or activity.

Apremilast side effects

Common apremilast side effects may include:

- nausea, diarrhea;
- [headache](#); or
- [cold symptoms](#) such as stuffy nose, sneezing, [sore throat](#).

Serious apremilast side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction to this medicine: [hives](#); difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Apremilast may cause other serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe [diarrhea](#), [nausea](#), and [vomiting](#);
- unexplained weight loss, or if you lose a lot of weight;
- mood changes, new or worsening depression; or
- thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself.

This is not a complete list of side effects, and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Apremilast side effects](#) (more detail)

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What other drugs will affect apremilast?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Other drugs may interact with apremilast, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Apremilast drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does apremilast interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

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References

1. [Otezla Product Label](#)

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use apremilast only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.


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Availability

Rx Prescription only


Pregnancy & Lactation

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug

Approval History

 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

5.3 / 10

[469 Reviews](#)

Images

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