

# Ozanimod - Medication Information

## What is ozanimod?

Ozanimod (brand name: Zeposia®) is a medication used for treating ulcerative colitis that helps block inflammation-causing lymphocytes (white blood cells) from reaching the inflamed colon.

## How is ozanimod given?

Ozanimod comes as a capsule, or pill, taken by mouth once a day. When you first start taking ozanimod, you will begin with a low dose. You will slowly increase the dose over the first week until you have reached 0.92 mg on day 8. Your provider will work with you to develop your medication schedule.

## What should I do if I miss a dose of ozanimod?

If a dose is missed **during** the first 2 weeks of treatment, contact your provider about restarting treatment with the starting dose. If a dose is missed **after** the first 2 weeks of treatment, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time.

## When can I expect ozanimod to work?

Some patients may feel an improvement in symptoms as soon as 2 weeks of starting ozanimod. Typically, up to 10 weeks may be required to see a benefit.

Ozanimod works for most patients. The medication may stop working in some patients every year. If a patient does not see an improvement in 8 weeks, an additional 5 to 10 weeks of ozanimod can be considered.

Studies have shown that early effective treatment for Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis is associated with long-term benefits including lowering the likelihood of needing surgery or hospitalization for health problems related to these conditions.

## What tests are needed while I am on ozanimod?

An eye exam when you first start on ozanimod is recommended. Your blood pressure and heart should also be checked when you first start on ozanimod and periodically after that. Your provider will have you get an EKG (electrocardiogram) test to monitor your heart rhythm. Blood counts and liver tests are done every 4 months while on ozanimod.

## What are the potential side effects of ozanimod?

Side effects with ozanimod may include:

**Increased liver function and blood pressure:** The most common side effects are an increase in liver enzymes which occur in about 2-5% (2-5 in 100) of patients and an increase in blood pressure which occur in 2% (2 in 100) of patients.

**Heart rate and rhythm changes:** Ozanimod can cause changes to your heart rate and rhythm. Patients with heart disease should be carefully monitored while on ozanimod.

**Allergic reaction:** Patients taking ozanimod may experience an allergic reaction as with any other medication. Reactions may include rash, hives, swelling of the lips or throat. This is uncommon and can be treated with steroid and anti-histamine medications.

**Drug-drug interaction:** Many medications have interactions with ozanimod. This can affect how a medication works or cause side effects. It is important to discuss with your doctor or pharmacist about all of the medications you are taking, whether they are prescribed to you or are taken over the counter.

Please see the medication package insert for the full list of potential side effects.

## **Is ozanimod safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding?**

Animal studies have shown that ozanimod may be harmful to babies during pregnancy. Because of this, it is recommended to not use ozanimod during pregnancy and for 3 months before trying to become pregnant.

It is unknown if ozanimod is found in breast milk. Based on the assumption that ozanimod is transferred into breast milk, talk with your provider about the potential risks and benefits when deciding whether to breastfeed while on the medication.

## **How can I take care of my health while on ozanimod?**

It is important to be up to date with your health maintenance while on ozanimod. This includes being current on all the recommended vaccines such as the flu, COVID-19, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines. Specifically, you should consider getting the shingles vaccine. You should only get the recombinant shingles vaccine (brand name: Shingrix®). Do not get the older shingles vaccines that contain the live but weakened virus. You should not get any live virus vaccines while on ozanimod or for 3 months after stopping it.

It is also important to be up to date in your general cancer screening including mammograms and pap smears for women, and skin check-ups for both men and women.

Speak to your primary care doctor about whether you are up to date on all your vaccines and cancer screening.

## **What if my out-of-pocket costs are high with this treatment?**

Our pharmacy team will work with you to see if you qualify for patient assistance and help with the application process.

The manufacturer of ozanimod has a patient assistance program called Zeposia 360 Support for patients on the medication. Please go to [www.zeposia.com/signupform](http://www.zeposia.com/signupform) for more information on this program.

## **What if I have questions about ozanimod?**

Talk with your provider about any questions or concerns you may have about ozanimod.

This document has been reviewed for plain language by Blum Center staff.

