



## IMPORTANT DRUG WARNING

August 2019

### **Subject: IMPORTANT DRUG WARNING - Serious Risks Regarding Mortality and Thrombosis with Use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR (tofacitinib), and Revision to Ulcerative Colitis Indication**

Dear Health Care Provider,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of important safety information and revised Prescribing Information for XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR (tofacitinib), which is approved for adults with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis (RA), active psoriatic arthritis (PsA), and moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC). (Please see complete Indications including Limitations of Use below.)

#### **Serious Risks with Use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR**

Based on emerging information from an ongoing postmarketing requirement safety study, the Prescribing Information and Medication Guide for XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR have changed.

**BOXED WARNINGS** have been updated to include:

#### **MORTALITY**

**Rheumatoid arthritis patients 50 years of age and older with at least one cardiovascular (CV) risk factor treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice a day had a higher rate of all-cause mortality, including sudden CV death, compared to those treated with XELJANZ 5 mg given twice daily or TNF blockers in a large, ongoing, postmarketing safety study.**

#### **THROMBOSIS**

**Thrombosis, including pulmonary embolism, deep venous thrombosis, and arterial thrombosis, has been observed at an increased incidence in rheumatoid arthritis patients who were 50 years of age and older with at least one CV risk factor treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily compared to XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily or TNF blockers in a large, ongoing postmarketing safety study. Many of these events were serious and some resulted in death. Avoid XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients at risk. Discontinue XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR and promptly evaluate patients with symptoms of thrombosis. For patients with UC, use XELJANZ at the lowest effective dose and for the shortest duration needed to achieve/maintain therapeutic response.**

Warnings and Precautions have been similarly updated.

*A dosage of XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily or XELJANZ XR 22 mg once daily is not recommended for the treatment of RA or PsA.*

**INDICATION AND USAGE** for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active UC has been revised to:

XELJANZ is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active UC, who have an inadequate response or who are intolerant to TNF blockers. Limitations of Use: Use of XELJANZ in combination with biological therapies for UC or with potent immunosuppressants such as azathioprine and cyclosporine is not recommended.

**DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION** for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active UC has been revised to:

Induction: XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily for 8 weeks; evaluate patients and transition to maintenance therapy depending on therapeutic response. If needed, continue 10 mg twice daily for a maximum of 16 weeks. Discontinue 10 mg twice daily after 16 weeks if adequate therapeutic response is not achieved.

Maintenance: XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily. Use of 10 mg twice daily beyond induction should be limited to those with loss of response and used for the shortest duration, with careful consideration of the benefits and risks for the individual patient. Use the lowest effective dose needed to maintain response.

#### **Prescriber Action**

- Counsel patients about the risks and benefits of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR.
- Thrombosis, including pulmonary embolism, deep venous thrombosis, and arterial thrombosis, has been observed at an increased incidence in rheumatoid arthritis patients who were 50 years of age and older with at least one CV risk factor treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily compared to XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily or TNF blockers in a large, ongoing postmarketing safety study. Many of these events were serious and some resulted in death. Avoid XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients that may be at increased risk of thrombosis.
- Advise patients to stop taking XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR and to call their healthcare provider right away if they experience any symptoms of thrombosis (sudden shortness of breath, chest pain worsened with breathing, swelling of leg or arm, leg pain or tenderness, red or discolored skin in the affected leg or arm).
- For the treatment of UC, use XELJANZ at the lowest effective dose and for the shortest duration needed to achieve/maintain therapeutic response.
- Reserve XELJANZ for the treatment of UC to patients who have an inadequate response or who are intolerant to TNF blockers. See the revised UC Indication as stated above.
  - As a result of the revision to the UC Indication you may have patients currently taking XELJANZ who were not previously treated with a TNF blocker. Use your medical judgment in carefully considering the risks and benefits of continuing or discontinuing XELJANZ, including the risks of thrombosis and mortality.

#### **Reporting Adverse Events**

Healthcare providers and patients are encouraged to report adverse events in patients taking XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR to Pfizer at 1-800-438-1985. You are also encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

This letter is not intended as a complete description of the benefits and risks of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR. The full Prescribing Information and Medication Guide should be consulted for further information. It is available at: <http://labeling.pfizer.com/ShowLabeling.aspx?id=959>

Patient safety is of the utmost importance to Pfizer and the company continually monitors the safety of its medicines. We wanted you to be aware of these updates to the Prescribing Information and Medication Guide so that you can consider them when counseling your patients on the use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please call Pfizer Medical Information at 1-800-438-1985.

Sincerely,

Tamas Koncz, MD, MSc, PhD  
Chief Medical Officer, Inflammation and Immunology  
Pfizer Inc.

#### **INDICATIONS AND USAGE**

- XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis (RA) who have had an inadequate response or intolerance to methotrexate. It may be used as monotherapy or in combination with methotrexate or other nonbiologic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Limitations of Use: Use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in combination with biologic DMARDs or with potent immunosuppressants such as azathioprine and cyclosporine is not recommended.
- XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis (PsA) who have had an inadequate response or intolerance to methotrexate or other disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Limitations of Use: Use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in combination with biologic DMARDs or with potent immunosuppressants such as azathioprine and cyclosporine is not recommended.
- XELJANZ is indicated for the treatment of adult patients with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC), who have an inadequate response or who are intolerant to TNF blockers. Limitations of Use: Use of XELJANZ in combination with biological therapies for UC or with potent immunosuppressants such as azathioprine and cyclosporine is not recommended. *[Important note: this is a revised indication.]*

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION**

##### **SERIOUS INFECTIONS**

**Patients treated with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR are at increased risk for developing serious infections that may lead to hospitalization or death. Most patients who developed these infections were taking concomitant immunosuppressants, such as methotrexate or corticosteroids.**

**If a serious infection develops, interrupt XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR until the infection is controlled.**

##### **Reported infections include:**

- **Active tuberculosis, which may present with pulmonary or extrapulmonary disease. Patients should be tested for latent tuberculosis before XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR use and during therapy. Treatment for latent infection should be initiated prior to XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR use.**
- **Invasive fungal infections, including cryptococcosis and pneumocystosis. Patients with invasive fungal infections may present with disseminated, rather than localized, disease.**
- **Bacterial, viral, including herpes zoster, and other infections due to opportunistic pathogens.**

The most common serious infections reported with XELJANZ included pneumonia, cellulitis, herpes zoster, urinary tract infection, diverticulitis, and appendicitis. Avoid use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients with an active, serious infection, including localized infections, or with chronic or recurrent infection.

In the UC population, XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily was associated with greater risk of serious infections compared to 5 mg twice daily. Opportunistic herpes zoster infections (including meningoencephalitis, ophthalmologic, and disseminated cutaneous) were seen in patients who were treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily.

**The risks and benefits of treatment with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR should be carefully considered prior to initiating therapy in patients with chronic or recurrent infection,** or those who have lived or traveled in areas of endemic TB or mycoses. Viral reactivation including herpes virus and hepatitis B reactivation have been reported. Screening for viral hepatitis should be performed in accordance with clinical guidelines before starting therapy.

**Patients should be closely monitored for the development of signs and symptoms of infection during and after treatment with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR, including the possible development of tuberculosis in patients who tested negative for latent tuberculosis infection prior to initiating therapy.**

Caution is also recommended in patients with a history of chronic lung disease, or in those who develop interstitial lung disease, as they may be more prone to infection.

##### **MORTALITY**

**Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients 50 years of age and older with at least one cardiovascular (CV) risk factor treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice a day had a higher rate of all-cause mortality, including sudden CV death, compared to those treated with XELJANZ 5 mg given twice daily or TNF blockers in a large, ongoing, postmarketing safety study.** XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily or XELJANZ XR 22 mg once daily is not recommended for the treatment of RA or PsA. For UC, use XELJANZ at the lowest effective dose and for the shortest duration needed to achieve/maintain therapeutic response.

##### **MALIGNANCIES**

**Lymphoma and other malignancies have been observed in patients treated with XELJANZ. Epstein Barr Virus-associated post-transplant lymphoproliferative disorder has been observed at an increased rate in renal transplant patients treated with XELJANZ and concomitant immunosuppressive medications.**

Consider the risks and benefits of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR treatment prior to initiating therapy in patients with a known malignancy other than a successfully treated non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) or when considering continuing XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients who develop a malignancy.

Malignancies (including solid cancers and lymphomas) were observed more often in patients treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily dosing in the UC long-term extension study.

Other malignancies were observed in clinical studies and the post-marketing settings, but not limited to, lung cancer, breast cancer, melanoma, prostate cancer, and pancreatic cancer. NMSCs have been reported in patients treated with XELJANZ. In the UC population, treatment with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily was associated with greater risk of NMSC. Periodic skin examination is recommended for patients who are at increased risk for skin cancer.

##### **THROMBOSIS**

**Thrombosis, including pulmonary embolism, deep venous thrombosis, and arterial thrombosis, has been observed at an increased incidence in RA patients who were 50 years of age and older with at least one CV risk factor treated with XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily compared to XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily or TNF blockers in a large, ongoing postmarketing safety study. Many of these events were serious and some resulted in death. Avoid XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients at risk. Discontinue XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR and promptly evaluate patients with symptoms of thrombosis. For patients with UC, use XELJANZ at the lowest effective dose and for the shortest duration needed to achieve/maintain therapeutic response.** XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily or XELJANZ XR 22 mg once daily is not recommended for the treatment of RA or PsA. In a long-term extension study in UC, four cases of pulmonary embolism were reported in patients taking XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily, including one death in a patient with advanced cancer.

##### **GASTROINTESTINAL PERFORATIONS**

Gastrointestinal perforations have been reported in XELJANZ clinical trials, although the role of JAK inhibition is not known. In these studies, many patients with rheumatoid arthritis were receiving background therapy with Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). There was no discernable difference in frequency of gastrointestinal perforation between the placebo and the XELJANZ arms in clinical trials of patients with UC, and many of them were receiving background corticosteroids. XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR should be used with caution in patients who may be at increased risk for gastrointestinal perforation (e.g., patients with a history of diverticulitis or taking NSAIDs).

##### **HYPERSENSITIVITY**

Angioedema and urticaria that may reflect drug hypersensitivity have been observed in patients receiving XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR and some events were serious. If a serious hypersensitivity reaction occurs, promptly discontinue tofacitinib while evaluating the potential cause or causes of the reaction.

##### **LABORATORY ABNORMALITIES**

**Lymphocyte Abnormalities:** Treatment with XELJANZ was associated with initial lymphocytosis at one month of exposure followed by a gradual decrease in mean lymphocyte counts. Avoid initiation of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR treatment in patients with a count less than 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. In patients who develop a confirmed absolute lymphocyte count less than 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, treatment with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR is not recommended. Risk of infection may be higher with increasing degrees of lymphopenia and consideration should be given to lymphocyte counts when assessing individual patient risk of infection. Monitor lymphocyte counts at baseline and every 3 months thereafter.

**Neutropenia:** Treatment with XELJANZ was associated with an increased incidence of neutropenia (less than 2000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>) compared to placebo. Avoid initiation of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR treatment in patients with an ANC less than 1000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. For patients who develop a persistent ANC of 500-1000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, interrupt XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR dosing until ANC is greater than or equal to 1000 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. In patients who develop an ANC less than 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, treatment with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR is not recommended. Monitor neutrophil counts at baseline and after 4-8 weeks of treatment and every 3 months thereafter.

**Anemia:** Avoid initiation of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR treatment in patients with a hemoglobin level less than 9 g/dL. Treatment with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR should be interrupted in patients who develop hemoglobin levels less than 8 g/dL or whose hemoglobin level drops greater than 2 g/dL on treatment. Monitor hemoglobin at baseline and after 4-8 weeks of treatment and every 3 months thereafter.

**Liver Enzyme Elevations:** Treatment with XELJANZ was associated with an increased incidence of liver enzyme elevation compared to placebo. Most of these abnormalities occurred in studies with background DMARD (primarily methotrexate) therapy. If drug-induced liver injury is suspected, the administration of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR should be interrupted until this diagnosis has been excluded. Routine monitoring of liver tests and prompt investigation of the causes of liver enzyme elevations is recommended to identify potential cases of drug-induced liver injury.

**Lipid Elevations:** Treatment with XELJANZ was associated with dose-dependent increases in lipid parameters, including total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Maximum effects were generally observed within 6 weeks. There were no clinically relevant changes in LDL/HDL cholesterol ratios. Manage patients with hyperlipidemia according to clinical guidelines. Assessment of lipid parameters should be performed approximately 4-8 weeks following initiation of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR therapy.

##### **VACCINATIONS**

Avoid use of live vaccines concurrently with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR. The interval between live vaccinations and initiation of tofacitinib therapy should be in accordance with current vaccination guidelines regarding immunosuppressive agents. Update immunizations in agreement with current immunization guidelines prior to initiating XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR therapy.

##### **PATIENTS WITH GASTROINTESTINAL NARROWING**

Caution should be used when administering XELJANZ XR to patients with pre-existing severe gastrointestinal narrowing. There have been rare reports of obstructive symptoms in patients with known strictures in association with the ingestion of other drugs utilizing a non-deformable extended release formulation.

##### **HEPATIC and RENAL IMPAIRMENT**

Use of XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR in patients with severe hepatic impairment is not recommended.

For patients with moderate hepatic impairment or with moderate or severe renal impairment taking XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily, reduce to XELJANZ 5 mg once daily.

For UC patients with moderate hepatic impairment or with moderate or severe renal impairment taking XELJANZ 10 mg twice daily, reduce to XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily.

##### **ADVERSE REACTIONS**

The most common serious adverse reactions were serious infections. The most commonly reported adverse reactions during the first 3 months in controlled clinical trials in patients with RA with XELJANZ 5 mg twice daily and placebo, respectively, (occurring in greater than or equal to 2% of patients treated with XELJANZ with or without DMARDs) were upper respiratory tract infection, nasopharyngitis, diarrhea, headache, and hypertension.

The safety profile observed in patients with active PsA treated with XELJANZ was consistent with the safety profile observed in RA patients.

Adverse reactions reported in ≥5% of patients treated with either 5 mg or 10 mg twice daily of XELJANZ and ≥1% greater than reported in patients receiving placebo in either the induction or maintenance clinical trials for UC were: nasopharyngitis, elevated cholesterol levels, headache, upper respiratory tract infection, increased blood creatine phosphokinase, rash, diarrhea, and herpes zoster.

##### **USE IN PREGNANCY**

Available data with XELJANZ/XELJANZ XR use in pregnant women are insufficient to establish a drug associated risk of major birth defects, miscarriage or adverse maternal or fetal outcomes. There are risks to the mother and the fetus associated with rheumatoid arthritis and UC in pregnancy. In animal studies, tofacitinib at 6.3 times the maximum recommended dose of 10 mg twice daily demonstrated adverse embryo-fetal findings. The relevance of these findings to women of childbearing potential is uncertain. Consider pregnancy planning and prevention for females of reproductive potential.