



PEMBROLIZUMAB

Expert review and update by:
Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation's Writers Bureau

WHAT IS PEMBROLIZUMAB?

Brand name: Keytruda®

Pembrolizumab is an immunotherapy that works by activating your own immune system to help fight cancer.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Pembrolizumab is given intravenously.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED RESULT?

Treatment with pembrolizumab can improve symptoms of skin lymphoma and reduce skin lesions. Pembrolizumab does not work in all patients. It is important to discuss with your physician whether this might be an appropriate therapy and what the expected results might be for your individual disease.

ARE THERE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS TO BE AWARE OF?

Because pembrolizumab is an immunotherapy that activates the immune system, certain immune side effects can occur. These are similar to autoimmune diseases. You should discuss with your physician what these side effects might be.

Sometimes, pembrolizumab can cause a flare of the lymphoma before the lymphoma gets better. This “flare” can make it hard to know whether the therapy is working.

WHAT ARE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS?

The following is not an exhaustive list of the possible side effects. For a complete list of possible side effects, please see the manufacturer’s available information on the specific therapy.

The most important side effects of pembrolizumab are immune-related side effects. These can be variable. These can include side effects like rash and thyroid dysfunction. Many of these are reversible and can be treated with steroids, but some are more permanent.