



INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE AFRICA

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What IBD Drugs are Available in South Africa?

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South Africa is fortunate to have access to most of the drugs available worldwide to treat IBD. Research and development is happening at a fast pace and new drugs are entering the market every year. It is important that you ask your gastroenterologist about the latest developments.

Steroids

Steroids are used to treat both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and are available in intravenous form, as tablets or as an enema. These are not long-term treatments but used over a short period to induce remission.

Salicylates

These drugs are used to treat ulcerative colitis and come in two varieties: sulphasalazine (Salazapyrine) and 5-aminosalicylates (Asacol, Pentasa, Mezavant, Salofalk). They are available in tablet form, granules or in suppositories and enemas.

Immunomodulators

These fall into two groups. The purine analogues and methotrexate. These medications are immune suppressing medications and regular blood test monitoring is required when using these treatments long-term.

The purine analogues are used to treat both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and come in tablet form. Products available in South Africa include azathioprine (Azamune, Azapress) and 6-mercaptopurine (Purinethol)

Methotrexate (Abitrexate) is used to treat Crohn's disease and administered weekly. It is always combined with a vitamin folic acid or folate. Methotrexate is available in a tablet or as an injection which can be administered by the patient under the skin every week.

Biological Drugs

There's been a rapid increase in the number of biological drugs available to South African patients over the last three years. These drugs are used to treat both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and are administered intravenously or by subcutaneous injection

Anti-TNF Drugs include infliximab (Revellex and Remsima), adalimumab (Humira or Amgevita) or golimumab (Simponi)

Gut specific integrin blockers: vedolizumab (Entyvio)

IL12/IL23 Blockers: ustekinumab (Stelara)

Small Molecules

Tofacitinib (Xeljanz) is a tablet used to treat ulcerative colitis.