

Genentech announces voluntary withdrawal of Psoriasis drug Raptiva® (efalizumab)

On April 8, 2009 the drug manufacturer Genentech announced the voluntary withdrawal of its product Raptiva® (efalizumab) from the U.S. market. Raptiva is an injectable medication that is used to treat plaque psoriasis and has been associated with an increased risk of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML). PML is a progressive neurologic disease of the central nervous system that is caused by a virus. PML has no effective treatment or cure and can lead to an irreversible decline in neurologic function and death.

The withdrawal of this medication will be gradual to allow time for prescribers to identify patients on Raptiva and to transition them to appropriate therapies. As of June 8, 2009 Raptiva will no longer be available in the United States. Genentech is advising prescribers to avoid initiating Raptiva for any new patients and to carefully transition patients from Raptiva to other appropriate therapies. Prescribers should also monitor patients for any neurological symptoms which may be a sign of PML.

Members taking Raptiva should contact their prescriber as soon as possible to discuss other psoriasis treatment options. Members should not stop taking Raptiva without speaking to their prescriber as a complete cessation of Raptiva may lead to serious side effects such as worsening of the psoriasis. Any decision about alternative treatments should be made by the prescriber based on individual patients needs.

Any adverse reactions experienced with the use of Raptiva, and/or quality problems should also be reported to the FDA's MedWatch Program by phone at 1-800-FDA-1088, by Fax at 1-800-FDA-0178, by mail at Med Watch, FDA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852-9787, or on the MedWatch website at www.fda.gov/medwatch.

In response to this event, FutureScripts/FutureScripts Secure is:

- Electronically distributing an FS INSight Alert to our clients
- Initiating notification to affected members and providers
- Posting a Web Alert for our members and providers
- Coordinate point-of-sale (POS) message for retail pharmacists

References:

FDA Statement on the Voluntary Withdrawal of Raptiva From the U.S. Market. Available at <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2009/NEW01992.html>. Accessed April 9, 2009.

Genentech Raptiva withdrawal letter for healthcare professionals. Available at http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/safety/2009/Raptiva_Withdrawal_DHCP_2009-04-08_FINAL.pdf. Accessed April 9, 2009.

Genentech Raptiva withdrawal letter for patients. Available at http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/safety/2009/Raptiva_Withdrawal_Patient_2009-04-08_FINAL.pdf. Accessed April 9, 2009.

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