

Lecanemab: Frequently Asked Questions

Mayo Clinic is not currently prescribing lecanemab. However, Mayo staff are looking at how we might be able to offer lecanemab on a case-by-case basis to patients who have been diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease. More information about how we may do this should be available in the next few months.

1. What is lecanemab?

Lecanemab is a monoclonal antibody drug that reduces certain protein deposits in the brain (known as amyloid beta plaques) which are associated with Alzheimer's Disease.

This drug is given by IV at an infusion center every two weeks. A recent clinical trial found that lecanemab treatment over 18 months slowed the rate of cognitive decline slightly in individuals with early symptomatic Alzheimer's disease.

2. Who are candidates to receive lecanemab?

Most people with Alzheimer's disease will not be candidates for lecanemab. Patients eligible to receive lecanemab at Mayo Clinic should meet the criteria from the clinical trial that led to its approval for use in addition to other safety criteria.

Patients must be diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or a mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease to be considered for lecanemab. People with normal cognitive functioning or later stages of Alzheimer's dementia cannot receive lecanemab.

Patients will need additional testing to ensure that lecanemab is appropriate for them. This may include memory and thinking tests, brain scans, tests (such as a lumbar puncture) to look for amyloid beta plaques in the brain, and genetic testing.

The medicines you take and your health history may affect whether you can be a candidate for lecanemab. Due to the increased risk of serious brain bleeding, patients with prior brain bleeds, history of cancer, and those taking anticoagulant medications (e.g., warfarin, apixaban) or antiplatelet medications other than aspirin will not be eligible for lecanemab therapy. Treatment with lecanemab may also impact the ability for patients to safely receive medications used to treat other common health conditions, such as thrombolytic therapy for heart attacks or strokes.

3. What are the risks of lecanemab?

Side effects of lecanemab include swelling or bleeding in the brain. This is known as ARIA (amyloid-related imaging abnormalities). Regular MRI scans are needed to monitor for ARIA and its complications. Common symptoms include dizziness, headache, visual disturbances, or worsened confusion. Some people do not have symptoms at all.

Based on severity, patients with ARIA may need:

- to stop lecanemab treatment;
- intravenous steroids or antiseizure medications;
- hospitalization.

In rare cases, death has been reported in patients treated with lecanemab.

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Cost of treatment includes the drug price in addition to the costs anticipated for routine monitoring. This includes planned tests, infusions, and visits. There may be unexpected costs as well. Complications may require more tests, other treatments, and more visits.

4. What else affects my candidacy?

You must live within 100 miles from Rochester, Minnesota. This is due to the frequent tests and visits you will need for safety monitoring. Patients will be evaluated by a multidisciplinary team to determine if you meet eligibility criteria. You must be willing to come to Mayo Clinic in Rochester for drug infusions, MRI scans, other tests, and clinical visits. You will receive lecanemab treatment only if approved by the multidisciplinary team. For those patients who are eligible for lecanemab treatment, in-person counseling and paper/digital education resources will be provided on the risks, benefits, and alternatives to treatment. Patients will also be connected with nursing and social work teams to provide additional supports for shared decision-making.

5. Can I be evaluated for lecanemab if I don't live in the region?

Yes. The Alzheimer's Disease Therapeutics Clinic at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota will pair a timely and efficient evaluation process with multidisciplinary expertise to help guide whether lecanemab is the right option for patients and their care partners. Within approximately 5 days, patients will receive all of the tests needed to determine eligibility (including a clinical evaluation, cognitive assessments, MRI, amyloid biomarker testing, and genetic testing). A team of clinicians will review each case and provide recommendations individualized to each patient. These recommendations can be shared with your local provider.

6. I do not live near Rochester. If lecanemab is recommended, can Mayo prescribe the medication even though I live outside the region?

Mayo Clinic providers in Rochester may only prescribe lecanemab at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Mayo Clinic providers will not be prescribing lecanemab to individuals living outside of the defined region surrounding Rochester. If lecanemab is recommended for individuals living outside of the Rochester region, patients will need to partner with clinicians in their local area to obtain prescriptions, infusions, and follow-up as directed by those local providers. If we know of a local team with expertise in lecanemab, we will share the contact information. We cannot guarantee that there will be an available center with expertise in your location. For patients receiving lecanemab treatments elsewhere, questions about ongoing therapy will need to be directed to local providers.