

A caregiver's guide to Zolgensma[®] ▼ (onasemnogene abeparvovec) treatment

Your child's doctor has given you this guide because your child has been prescribed Zolgensma. This guide aims to provide practical information to support discussions with your doctor. It should be read along with the package leaflet you receive for this medicine

▼ This product is subject to additional monitoring. If your child gets any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine. You can report side effects directly via HPRA Pharmacovigilance, website: www.hpra.ie. Side effects could also be reported to Novartis preferably via www.novartis.com/report, or by email to drugsafety.dublin@novartis.com or by calling 01 2080 612

If you have any questions or concerns about Zolgensma speak with your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. You have been given this guide as your child has been diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and has been prescribed Zolgensma by their doctor

You may need to refer to this information again, so please keep a copy of this guide together with the package leaflet you receive for this medicine

This guide has been developed to provide useful information focusing on:

- What is SMA
- What is Zolgensma and how does it work
- Important safety information and possible side effects of Zolgensma
- Each step of the Zolgensma treatment journey

If you have any questions or concerns about this medicine or your child's health and wellbeing please speak with your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional

Additional copies of the educational material can be downloaded from www.hpra.ie

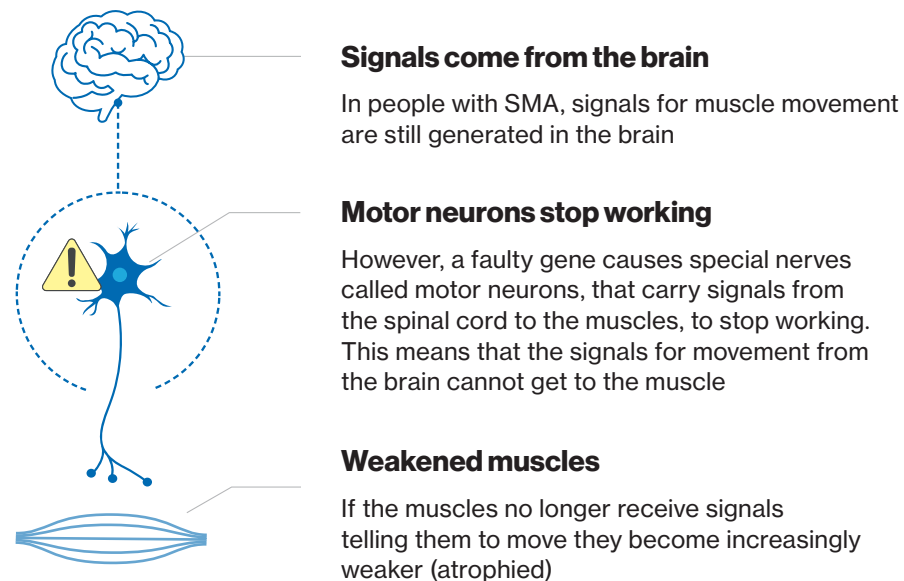
Useful contacts

What is in this guide?

About SMA	4
• What is SMA?	4
• What are the different types of SMA?	5
• What causes SMA?	6
• How do you get SMA?	7
About Zolgensma	8
• What is Zolgensma?	8
Understanding the risks	10
• Understanding the risks of Zolgensma	10
Treatment with Zolgensma	15
• Before treatment	16
• Treatment day	18
• After treatment	19
Physician contact details	26
Local associations	27
Common words to know	28
Notes	30

What is SMA?

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare genetic disease in which nerves are lost causing weakness of the muscles. This occurs because special nerve cells in the body that control muscle movement, called motor neurons, deteriorate and stop working



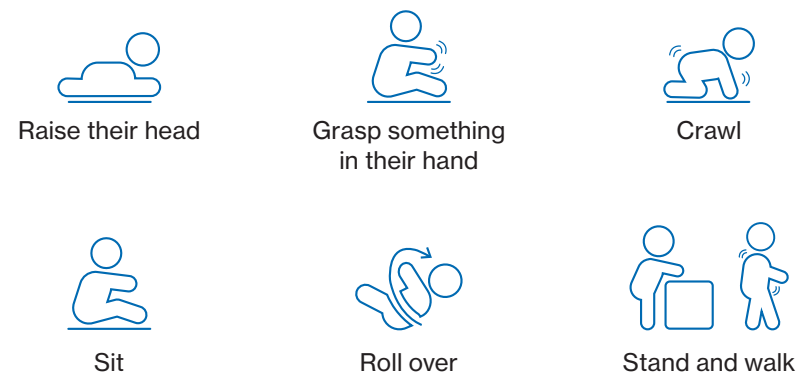
In SMA, the ability to think, learn, and build relationships is unchanged

What are the symptoms of SMA?

SMA has a range of symptoms that may vary from person to person and in severity. SMA may affect daily activities such as breathing, eating, sitting, crawling and walking. The earlier symptoms of SMA present, the more severe the disease is likely to be

What are the different types of SMA?

At diagnosis, individuals with SMA may be classified into types based on their age of onset and maximum functional ability, or 'motor milestone'. Motor milestones relevant for understanding the type of SMA children may have include their ability to:



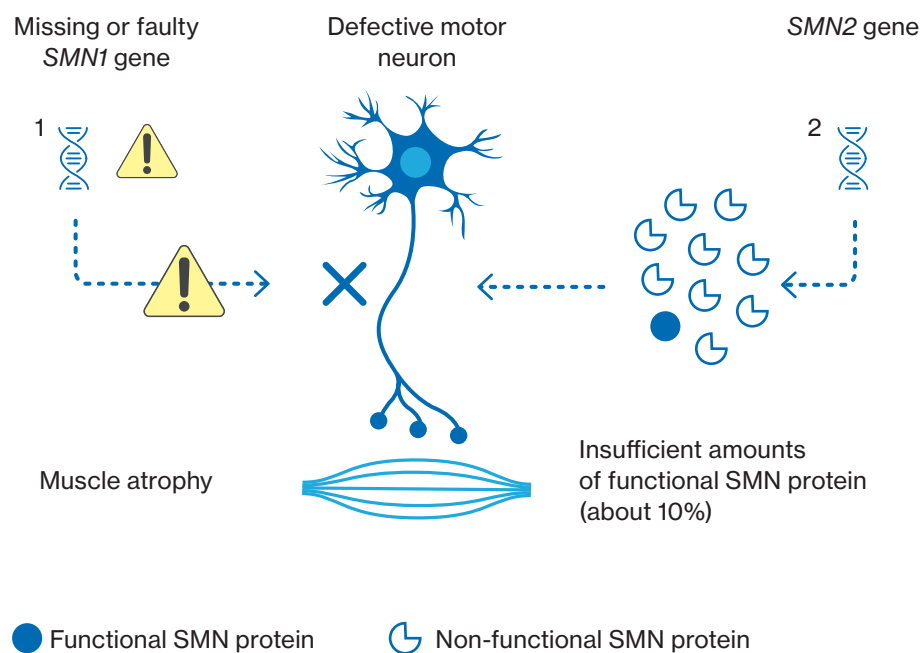
Age at onset	Birth	≤6 months	6–18 months	>18 months	≥18 years
Functional ability	Foetus affected, could be before birth	Unable to sit independently	Able to sit, may stand, unable to walk independently	Independent walking	Independent walking into adulthood
Classification	SMA Type 0	SMA Type 1	SMA Type 2	SMA Type 3	SMA Type 4
Severity					

Without intervention or treatment, children with more severe forms of SMA have a shortened lifespan. With early medical intervention and treatment, deterioration can be slowed, with children often able to achieve milestones rarely seen during the natural course of the disease

What causes SMA?

A protein called survival motor neuron (SMN) protein is vital for motor neurons to be able to work properly. Without SMN protein, motor neurons in the spinal cord stop working and muscles become weaker. SMN protein is made in the body from the *SMN* gene

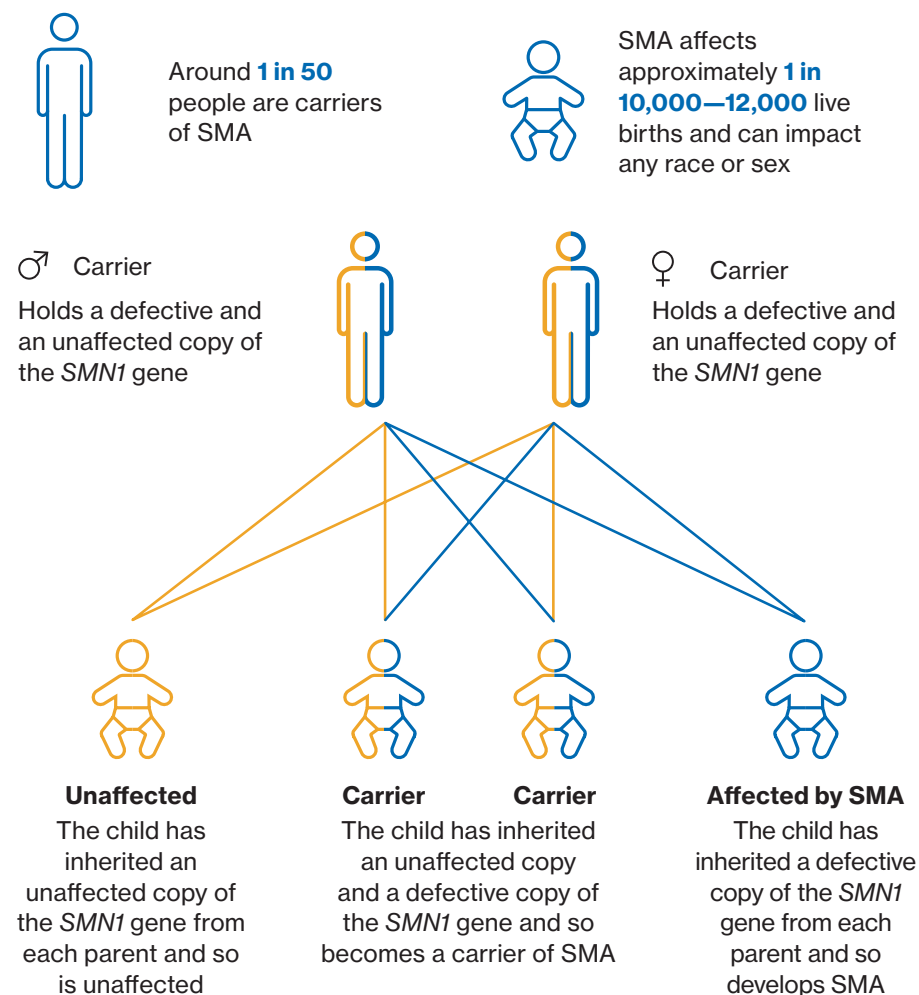
In SMA, the main *SMN* gene known as *SMN1* is faulty or missing. There is a second *SMN* gene known as *SMN2* that acts more like a 'back-up' and only produces small amounts of SMN protein. In SMA, not enough SMN protein is being produced and the motor neurons stop working causing the muscles to become weaker



How do you get SMA?

SMA is typically inherited, although occasionally it is caused by a random error in the *SMN1* gene

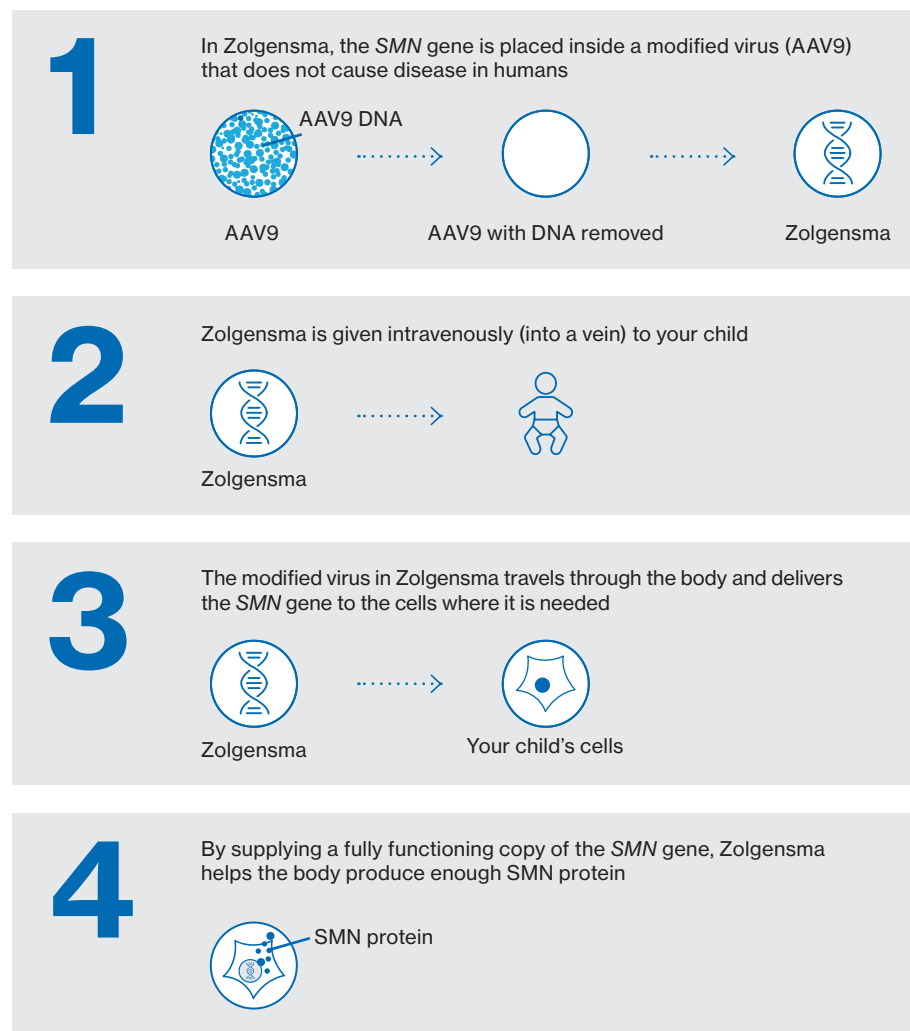
Children inherit two copies of the *SMN1* gene, one copy from each parent. Half of a child's genetic information comes from the mother and half from the father. People with one unaffected and one faulty *SMN1* gene are known as carriers, they normally show no signs of SMA. If both parents are carriers there is effectively a 25% chance the baby will inherit and develop SMA



What is Zolgensma?

Zolgensma is a treatment for babies and young children with SMA. Zolgensma is a type of treatment called ‘gene therapy’

Zolgensma is made up of a modified virus, AAV9, which contains a fully functioning copy of the *SMN* gene (the gene that is faulty in SMA). The AAV9 virus in Zolgensma is used to carry the replacement gene into the body and cells where it is needed



Zolgensma in advanced SMA

Zolgensma can rescue motor neurons that are still alive and capable of growth, but not dead motor neurons. Children with less severe symptoms of SMA may have enough live motor neurons to benefit from Zolgensma treatment. Zolgensma may not work as well in children with severe symptoms

Understanding the risks of Zolgensma

Like all medicines, Zolgensma can have side effects, although not everybody gets them

If your child experiences any side effects, talk to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional immediately



Important safety information and when to seek medical attention



Liver problems

Tell your child's medical team before your child is given this medicine if your child has, or has had any liver problems. In some cases, Zolgensma can cause an immune response that could lead to an increase in enzymes (proteins found within the body) produced by the liver or injury to the liver

Injury to the liver can lead to serious outcomes, including liver failure and death. Possible signs you need to look out for after your child is given this medicine include vomiting, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or of the whites of the eyes), or reduced alertness. Tell your child's doctor straight away if you notice your child develops any symptoms suggestive of injury to the liver



Abnormal blood clotting

Zolgensma may increase the risk of abnormal clotting of blood in small blood vessels (thrombotic microangiopathy), generally within the first 2 weeks after Zolgensma treatment. These blood clots could affect your child's kidneys. Tell your doctor immediately if you notice signs and symptoms such as bruising easily, seizures (fits) or decrease in urine output

Extremely close attention should be paid to these signs and symptoms, as abnormal blood clotting (thrombotic microangiopathy) is serious and can be life-threatening if it is not treated



Low platelet count

Zolgensma can lower blood-platelet counts (thrombocytopenia), generally within the first 3 weeks following Zolgensma treatment. Possible signs of a low blood-platelet count you need to look out for after your child is given Zolgensma include abnormal bruising or bleeding

Speak to your doctor if you see signs such as bruising or bleeding for longer than usual if your child has been hurt

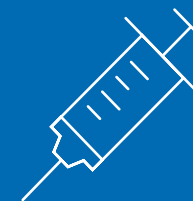


Elevated troponin-I

Zolgensma can raise levels of a heart protein called troponin-I that may indicate injury to the heart. You need to look out for possible signs of heart problems after your child is given Zolgensma, such as pale grey or blue skin colour, difficulty in breathing (e.g. rapid breathing, shortness of breath), swelling of the arms and legs or of the belly

Your child will have blood tests to check liver function, kidney function, the amount of blood cells (including red blood cells and platelets) and troponin-I level before treatment with Zolgensma

For at least 3 months following treatment, your child will have regular blood tests to check liver function and to monitor for changes in platelets and troponin-I levels. Depending on the values and other signs and symptoms, further evaluations may be required. The duration of testing will be decided by your child's doctor



Please refer to the package leaflet included with your child's medicine for more information on Zolgensma. Do not hesitate to talk to your child's medical team if you have any questions

Understanding the risks of Zolgensma (continued)

Like all medicines, Zolgensma can have side effects, although not everybody gets them

If your child experiences any side effects, talk to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional immediately



Allergies

Your child must not be given Zolgensma if they are allergic to any of the ingredients (ingredients are listed in section 6 of the package leaflet included with your child's medicine)



Corticosteroids

Your child will also be given corticosteroids (prednisolone or equivalent) for a period of time before and after treatment with Zolgensma. The length of time that corticosteroids will be given to your child following Zolgensma treatment will vary depending on liver enzyme values and other signs and symptoms, and will be decided by your child's doctor. This period will be a minimum of 2 months

Corticosteroids will help manage any potential increase in liver enzymes that your child could develop following an immune response to Zolgensma. The dose of corticosteroid your child will receive will be worked out by your child's doctor depending on your child's weight

During corticosteroid dosing, your child may face new infections or other usual child illnesses which may require the use of other medicines. Prior to treatment with any other medicines, or if you have any questions about corticosteroids, it is important to consult your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional



Other medicines and Zolgensma

Zolgensma will be given to your child once only. Tell your child's doctor or nurse if your child is taking, has recently taken or might take any other medicines



Infection

Your child may have a weakened immune system due to corticosteroids, meaning that infections that unaffected people can usually fight off may make your child seriously ill. If your child develops an infection (e.g. cold, flu or bronchiolitis) **before** or **after** being treated with Zolgensma this could possibly lead to other more serious complications that may require urgent medical attention

You should tell your child's doctor straight away if you notice your child develops any signs and symptoms suggestive of infection **before** or **after** Zolgensma treatment, such as:

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Wheezing
- Runny nose
- Fever

It is important to prevent infections before and after treatment with Zolgensma by avoiding situations that may increase the risk of your child getting infections. You and any other close contacts with your child can help to prevent infection by following good hand hygiene, good coughing/sneezing etiquette, and limiting potential contacts

Understanding the risks of Zolgensma *(continued)*

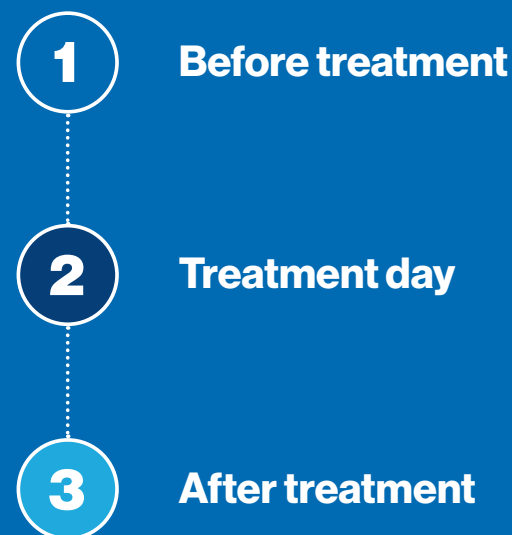
In summary, seek urgent medical attention if your child develops any of the following signs or symptoms:



- **Bruising or bleeding** for longer than usual if your child has been hurt – these may be signs of a low blood-platelet count (thrombocytopenia)
- **Bruising easily, seizures** (fits) or **decrease in urine output** – these may be signs of abnormal clotting of blood in small blood vessels (thrombotic microangiopathy). Extremely close attention should be paid to these signs and symptoms, as abnormal blood clotting can be life-threatening if it is not treated
- **Vomiting, jaundice** (yellowing of the skin or of the whites of the eyes), or **reduced alertness** – these may be signs of possible problems with the liver (including liver failure)
- **Pale grey or blue skin colour, difficulty in breathing** (e.g. rapid breathing, shortness of breath), **swelling of the arms and legs or of the belly** – these may be signs of possible problems with the heart
- **Coughing, wheezing, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fever** – these may be signs of infection (e.g. cold, flu or bronchiolitis)

Treatment with Zolgensma

The steps on the following pages will help you and your family understand what to expect next



1. Before treatment

To help decide if Zolgensma is suitable for your child, your child's doctor will carry out tests for antibodies before treatment



AAV9 antibody test

Antibodies are produced by the body's immune system to help protect it against disease. The presence of certain antibodies, called AAV9 antibodies, can cause your child to have an immune response to Zolgensma. To help decide if Zolgensma is suitable for your child, your child's doctor will carry out tests for antibodies before treatment

Your child may have elevations in AAV9 antibodies. If the baby is new-born, it may be antibodies that have been transferred from the mother to the baby during pregnancy, and these elevations will often decrease over time after birth. If your child has elevations in AAV9 antibodies after their first test, they will be eligible for retesting after a period of time. If you have any questions, please ask your child's doctor



Blood tests

Before Zolgensma treatment your child will have blood tests to check and establish baseline levels for:

- Liver function
- Kidney function
- The amount of blood cells (including red blood cells and platelets)
- Troponin-I level

These measurements will help your doctor to monitor your child's levels after Zolgensma treatment



Corticosteroids

24 hours before being treated with Zolgensma, your child will be given corticosteroids (prednisolone or equivalent) to manage potential increases in liver enzymes

The dose of corticosteroid your child will receive will be worked out by your child's doctor depending on your child's weight. To make sure that your child does not miss corticosteroid dosing, tell your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional in the event of vomiting before treatment with Zolgensma



Infection

It is important to let your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional know straight away if your child develops symptoms suggestive of infection **before** or **after** Zolgensma. If your child develops any signs and symptoms suggestive of infection before treatment with Zolgensma, the infusion may need to be delayed until the infection is resolved. If your child develops symptoms after treatment with Zolgensma it may lead to medical complications that may require urgent medical attention

There is a potential infection risk associated with any surgical procedure, including circumcision. It is recommended that such procedures be performed in a medical setting to minimise the risk of infections

[See page 13 for signs of a possible infection](#)



Overall health

Before being treated with Zolgensma, it is important that your child's overall health is adequate, otherwise treatment may need to be postponed. This includes being hydrated, having good nutrition and being free of any active infections. If you have any concerns about your child's overall health before treatment with Zolgensma, please speak to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional

2. Treatment day

Your child's medical team will ensure you know exactly what to expect on the day of treatment and how to prepare



Prednisolone

The first dose of corticosteroids (prednisolone or equivalent) will have been given to your child 24 hours before being treated with Zolgensma. [See page 17 for information on corticosteroid dosing before treatment with Zolgensma](#)

On the day of treatment your child will receive their second dose of oral corticosteroids (prednisolone or equivalent) as prescribed. The corticosteroid dosing regimen is important in managing any potential increases in liver enzymes and will continue for a period of time after treatment. [See page 21 for information on corticosteroid dosing after treatment with Zolgensma](#)

To make sure that your child does not miss corticosteroid dosing, tell your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional in the event of vomiting after corticosteroid dosing



Zolgensma will be given to your child ONCE only



Zolgensma infusion

Zolgensma will be given to your child by a single, intravenous infusion. This involves placing a catheter (plastic tube) into one of your child's veins using a needle. A secondary, back-up catheter will also be inserted in case of any blockage in the primary catheter. The infusion will be given by a doctor or nurse trained in the management of SMA. The infusion will take around 60 minutes

The amount of Zolgensma your child will receive will be worked out by your child's doctor depending on your child's weight

3. After treatment

The duration of hospitalisation after treatment with Zolgensma will be decided by your child's doctor. If you have any questions, talk to your child's medical team



Possible side effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can have side effects, although not everybody gets them

In summary, seek urgent medical attention if your child develops any of the following signs or symptoms:



- **Bruising or bleeding** for longer than usual if your child has been hurt – these may be signs of a low blood-platelet count (thrombocytopenia)
- **Bruising easily, seizures (fits) or decrease in urine output** – these may be signs of abnormal clotting of blood in small blood vessels (thrombotic microangiopathy). Extremely close attention should be paid to these signs and symptoms, as abnormal blood clotting can be life-threatening if it is not treated
- **Vomiting, jaundice** (yellowing of the skin or of the whites of the eyes), or **reduced alertness** – these may be signs of possible problems with the liver (including liver failure)
- **Pale grey or blue skin colour, difficulty in breathing** (e.g. rapid breathing, shortness of breath), **swelling of the arms and legs or of the belly** – these may be signs of possible problems with the heart
- **Coughing, wheezing, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fever** – these may be signs of infection (e.g. cold, flu or bronchiolitis)

3. After treatment *(continued)*

Talk to your child's medical team straight away if your child develops any other side effects. These can include:

Very common (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)

- Increases in liver enzymes seen in blood tests

Common (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)

- Vomiting
- Fever

Reporting of side effects:

If your child experiences any side effects or you are concerned that something might be wrong, talk to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional immediately

This includes any possible side effects mentioned or not mentioned in this guide or the package leaflet included with your child's medicine

You can also report side effects directly via HPRA Pharmacovigilance, website: www.hpra.ie. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine

When to seek medical attention

Seek urgent medical attention in any of the following circumstances:



In some cases, Zolgensma can affect the function of the liver and lead to injury of the liver. Possible signs you need to look out for after your child is given this medicine include **vomiting**, **jaundice** (yellowing of the skin or of the whites of the eyes), or **reduced alertness**

Zolgensma can lower blood-platelet count (thrombocytopenia). Speak to your doctor if you see signs such as **bruising** or **bleeding** for longer than usual if your child has been hurt

Zolgensma can increase the risk of abnormal clotting of blood in small blood vessels (thrombotic microangiopathy). Tell your doctor immediately if you see signs and symptoms such as **bruising easily**, **seizures** (fits) or **decrease in urine output**

Zolgensma may cause raised levels of a heart/cardiac-specific protein called 'troponin-I' that may indicate injury to the heart. Speak to your doctor immediately if you see signs and symptoms such as **pale grey or blue skin colour**, **difficulty in breathing** (e.g. rapid breathing, shortness of breath) or **swelling of the arms and legs or of the belly**

Tell your doctor in the event of **vomiting before or after treatment** with Zolgensma, to make sure that your child does not miss corticosteroid (prednisolone or equivalent) dosing

Tell your doctor immediately if your child develops any signs and symptoms suggestive of infection (e.g. cold, flu or bronchiolitis) **before** or **after** being treated with Zolgensma, as this could possibly lead to other more serious complications that may require urgent medical attention. Signs to look out for are **coughing**, **wheezing**, **sneezing**, **runny nose**, **sore throat**, or **fever**

3. After treatment *(continued)*



Corticosteroid dosing after Zolgensma

Your child will be given corticosteroid treatment daily for around 2 months after being given Zolgensma. This period may be prolonged if your child's liver enzymes do not decrease quickly enough, until they decrease to an acceptable level. The dose of corticosteroid given to your child will be slowly reduced during this time until treatment can be fully stopped

Your child's medical team will decide and explain when and how they will stop this treatment for your child. To make sure that your child does not miss corticosteroid dosing, tell your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional in the event of vomiting or any missed doses **(for any reason)** after treatment with Zolgensma. [Do not stop corticosteroid treatment prior to discussion with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist/other healthcare professional](#)

If you have any questions about corticosteroids, talk to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional



Regular follow-ups

Following Zolgensma treatment, your child will continue to be under the regular supervision of a dedicated healthcare team. Your child will require follow-up visits as necessary, whether these are for general check-ups, if your child is experiencing any side effects, or if you have any concerns or queries



Regular blood tests

Following Zolgensma treatment your child will have regular blood tests for:

- Liver function – these tests will take place for at least 3 months after treatment to monitor for increases in liver enzymes. If your child's liver function worsens after Zolgensma treatment, or they show any signs of illness, they will be promptly assessed and closely monitored by their doctor
- Blood-platelet count and troponin-I – these will take place for a period of time after treatment to monitor changes in platelets and troponin-I levels

Depending on the results of these blood tests, as well as other signs and symptoms, further testing may be required. It is important to closely follow the blood test schedule and to immediately report to your child's medical team all signs and symptoms that your child may develop after they receive their treatment

3. After treatment *(continued)*



Management of your child's bodily waste

Some of the active substance in Zolgensma may be excreted through your child's bodily waste after treatment. You and other people who care for your child should follow good hand-hygiene as outlined below for **at least 1 month** after your child's treatment with Zolgensma



Wear protective gloves when coming into direct contact with your child's bodily fluids (urine) or waste (faeces)



Wash hands thoroughly afterwards with soap and warm running water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser



Use double plastic bags to dispose of soiled nappies and other waste. Disposable nappies may still be disposed of in household waste

If you have questions on how to handle your child's bodily waste, please talk to your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist/other healthcare professional

Supportive care

While Zolgensma supplies a fully functioning copy of the *SMN* gene, your child still has SMA

Additional supportive therapies used to care for people with SMA include:



Orthopaedic treatments



Physiotherapy



Support with nutrition, eating and drinking



Breathing support



Prevention of airway infections (e.g. prevention of flu and pneumonia with vaccinations)



Removal of secretions from the airways

Your child's healthcare team will work with you to ensure your child's supportive care needs are managed



Physician contact details

Your child will continue to be monitored following Zolgensma infusion by a team of healthcare professionals. If you have any concerns and want to speak to your child's doctor or healthcare team, you can use the below form to note down their contact details

Name:
Role:
Contact number:
Contact e-mail:

Name:
Role:
Contact number:
Contact e-mail:

Name:
Role:
Contact number:
Contact e-mail:

Name:
Role:
Contact number:
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Name:
Role:
Contact number:
Contact e-mail:

Name:
Role:
Contact number:
Contact e-mail:

Local associations



There are numerous patient association groups across the globe that can help to support you and your child with SMA. They can provide information on SMA, latest research, and community support. Speak to your child's doctor or healthcare team who can provide you with groups more local to you

Common words to know

Adeno-associated virus 9 (AAV9)

AAV9 is a type of virus. AAV9 can be modified so that it does not cause disease in humans. In Zolgensma, modified AAV9 is the vector used to deliver the fully functioning copy of the *SMN* gene

Antibodies

Antibodies are produced by the body's immune system to help protect it against disease. Each type of antibody is unique and defends the body against a specific type of disease

Atrophy

Atrophy means to waste away or shrink. For example, a muscle that is wasting away is called an atrophied muscle

Brain stem

The brain stem is a part of the brain that supports critical functions in the body including breathing and sleep. The brain stem joins the spinal cord with the rest of the brain

Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids are a type of medicine which suppress the immune system in order to try to help manage any potential increase in liver enzymes after treatment with Zolgensma

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)

DNA is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA

Genes

Genes are sets of instructions that can tell the body how to make proteins. Genes come in pairs; one copy inherited from each parent

Gene therapy

Gene therapy is a way of treating or preventing progression of a disease using genes. There are different types of gene therapy that work in different ways. These include replacing or repairing missing or faulty genes, adding a new gene to help another medicine work better, or stopping the instructions from a gene that is producing too much of a protein that then becomes toxic to the body

Genetic disease

A medical condition caused by a faulty or missing gene or genes. Genetic diseases are inherited. SMA is an example of a genetic disease

Intravenous infusion

An infusion into a vein using a catheter (plastic tube), which is inserted into the vein using a needle

Motor neuron

These special nerves carry signals from the brain to the muscles to control movement

There are two types of motor neurons: upper motor neurons that carry signals from the brain to the brain stem and spinal cord, and lower motor neurons that carry signals from the upper motor neurons to the muscles

Platelets

A type of cell that is found in the blood, which is responsible for blood clotting

Prednisolone

Prednisolone is a type of medicine called a corticosteroid, which helps to manage any potential increase in liver enzymes after treatment with Zolgensma

Proteins

Proteins are important molecules involved in nearly every function in the body. Proteins help build the cells of the body, while also helping cells transport and produce important substances, repair and survive

Side effect

A side effect is a secondary, undesirable effect of a medicine

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)

SMA is a rare disease that causes muscles to gradually become weaker because specialised nerve cells in the body that control muscle movement, called motor neurons, stop working. The motor neurons deteriorate and stop working because they do not have enough *SMN* protein

SMN1 gene

The *SMN1* gene is the primary *SMN* gene, producing the *SMN* protein the motor neurons need to work properly. In people with SMA, both copies of this gene are faulty or missing. This means that the cells of the body are not able to produce enough *SMN* protein

SMN2 gene

The *SMN2* gene acts as a 'back-up' to support *SMN* protein production. *SMN2* only produces small amounts of functional *SMN* protein

Survival motor neuron (SMN) protein

SMN protein is vital for motor neurons to work properly and survive. Without enough *SMN* protein, motor neurons deteriorate and stop working. *SMN* protein is produced by the body from the *SMN* gene

Notes

Detailed information on this medicine is available on the European Medicines Agency website:

<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/human/EPAR/zolgensma#product-information-sections>

This guide has been produced by Novartis. The information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with your doctor or care team. Information is related to spinal muscular atrophy and is meant as a general overview

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