

## PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

SCHEDULING STATUS: 

S4
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### **ORENCIA 125 mg solution for subcutaneous injection**

#### **Abatacept**

**ORENCIA contains sugar (sucrose) 171,19 mg per solution for injection.**

This formulation is not suitable for injection into a vein (IV injection).

#### **Read all of this leaflet carefully before you are given ORENCIA 125 mg**

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have further questions, please ask your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or other health care provider.
- ORENCIA has been prescribed for you personally and you should not share your medicine with other people. It may harm them, even if their symptoms are the same as yours.

#### **What is in this leaflet**

1. What ORENCIA 125 mg is and what it is used for
2. What you need to know before you use ORENCIA 125 mg
3. How to use ORENCIA 125 mg
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store ORENCIA 125 mg
6. Contents of the pack and other information

#### **1. What ORENCIA 125 mg is and what it is used for**

ORENCIA contains the active substance abatacept, a protein produced in cell cultures. ORENCIA lessens the immune system's attack on normal tissues by interfering with the immune cells (called T lymphocytes) that

**Orencia 125 mg (47/3.1/0467)**Each pre-filled syringe contains 125 mg abatacept

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contribute to the development of rheumatoid arthritis. ORENCIA selectively modulates the activation of T cells involved in the immune system's inflammatory response.

ORENCIA is a medicine that is used to treat adults with active rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

Rheumatoid arthritis is a long-term progressive systemic disease that, if untreated, can lead to serious consequences, such as joint destruction, increased disability and impairment of daily activities. In people with rheumatoid arthritis the body's own immune system attacks normal body tissues, leading to pain and swelling of the joints. This can cause joint damage.

ORENCIA 125 mg is not suitable for use in children younger than 18 years.

**2. What you need to know before you use ORENCIA 125 mg****ORENCIA 125 mg should not be administered to you:**

- if you are hypersensitive (allergic) to abatacept or any of the other ingredients of ORENCIA.
- if you have active or untreated tuberculosis (TB)
- if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding your baby (see Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility)

**Warnings and precautions**

Tell your doctor or health care provider before being given the injection:

- if you, your partner or your caregiver notice new onset or worsening of neurological symptoms including general muscle weakness, disturbance of vision, difficulty speaking, a change in the way you walk or problem with your balance, changes in thinking, memory and orientation leading to confusion and personality changes contact your doctor immediately because these may be symptoms of a very rare, serious and potentially fatal brain infection called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML).
- if you are taking a TNF (tumour necrosis factor) blocker such as etanercept or infliximab to treat RA, as you have a greater chance of getting a serious infection if you use ORENCIA with other biologic medicines for RA.

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- if you are taking anakinra
- if you have any kind of infection including an infection that is in only one place in your body (such as an open cut or sore), or an infection that is in your whole body (such as the flu). Having an infection could put you at risk for serious side effects from ORENCIA. If you are unsure, please ask your doctor.
- if you have had tuberculosis (TB), a positive skin test for TB, or if you recently have been in close contact with someone who has had TB.
- if you develop any of the symptoms of TB (a dry cough that doesn't go away, weight loss, fever, night sweats) call your doctor right away. Before you start ORENCIA, your doctor should examine you for TB and perform a skin test.
- if you have a history of chronic obstructive pulmonary (lung) disease (COPD).
- if you are scheduled to have surgery.
- if you have cancer, your doctor will decide if you can still be given ORENCIA.
- if you recently received a vaccination or are scheduled for any vaccination.
- if you have viral hepatitis. Before you start ORENCIA, your doctor may examine you for hepatitis.
- if you have human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

Allergic reactions such as chest tightness, wheezing, severe dizziness or light-headedness, swelling or skin rash have been reported with Orencia.

**Children and adolescents**

ORENCIA 125 mg is not suitable for use in children younger than 18 years.

**Other medicines and ORENCIA 125 mg**

Always tell your health care provider if you are taking any other medicine. (This includes all complementary or traditional medicines.)

ORENCIA should not be used with biologic medications for RA, including TNF-blockers such as etanercept and infliximab. There is not enough evidence to recommend ORENCIA being given with anakinra.

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ORENCIA can be used with other medicines commonly used to treat RA, such as cortisone or painkillers, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen or diclofenac.

**ORENCIA 125 mg with food and drink and alcohol**

Not applicable

**Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility**

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, please consult your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider for advice before receiving this medicine.

ORENCIA should not be used in pregnancy or mothers breastfeeding their infants.

**Driving and using machines**

ORENCIA can make you feel dizzy and cause impaired vision. If you feel dizzy or have impaired vision you should not drive or operate machines.

It is not always possible to predict to what extent ORENCIA may interfere with the daily activities of a patient.

Patients should ensure that they do not engage in the following activities (e.g driving, riding, flying, sailing, operating machines/equipment) until they are aware of the measure to which ORENCIA affects them.

**ORENCIA 125 mg contains sugar (sucrose)**

ORENCIA 125 mg solution for subcutaneous injection contains sucrose, which may have an effect on the control of your blood sugar if you have diabetes mellitus. If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before you receive ORENCIA.

**3. How to use ORENCIA 125 mg**

Do not share medicines prescribed for you with any other person.

Always use Orencia 125 mg exactly as described in this leaflet or as your doctor or pharmacist has told you.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

The usual dose is:

You will receive ORENCIA as an injection under your skin (SC or subcutaneous). You will receive an injection once a week. Your doctor may start your treatment with a dose of ORENCIA lyophilisate for solution for intravenous infusion given to you in a vein in your arm over a period of 30 minutes. Your doctor will tell you how long your treatment with ORENCIA will last.

In the beginning, your doctor or healthcare professional may inject your ORENCIA solution for subcutaneous injection. However, you and your healthcare professional may decide that you may inject ORENCIA yourself. In this case you will receive training on how to inject ORENCIA yourself. You will find detailed “***Instructions for preparing and giving a subcutaneous injection of ORENCIA***” at the end of this leaflet.

ORENCIA solution for subcutaneous injection under the skin is not suitable for use in children younger than 18 years.

Your doctor will tell you how long your treatment with ORENCIA will last. Do not stop treatment early. If you have the impression that the effect of ORENCIA is too strong or too weak, tell your doctor or pharmacist.

**If you receive more ORENCIA 125 mg than you should**

In the event of overdosage, consult your doctor or pharmacist. If neither is available, contact the nearest hospital or poison control centre.

**If you forget to use ORENCIA 125 mg**

If you miss your dose of ORENCIA, ask your doctor when to schedule your next dose.

**4. Possible side effects**

ORENCIA can have side effects.

Not all side effects reported for ORENCIA are included in this leaflet. Should your general health worsen or if you experience any untoward effects while receiving ORENCIA, please consult your health care provider for advice.

If any of the following happens, stop receiving ORENCIA and tell your doctor immediately, or go to the casualty department at your nearest hospital:

- swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, face, lips and mouth or throat, which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing,
- rash or itching,
- fainting.

**Serious infections. Patients receiving ORENCIA are at increased risk for developing infections including pneumonia, and other infections caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi, including tuberculosis.**

These are all very serious side effects. If you have them, you may have had a serious reaction to ORENCIA. You may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation.

Cancer (malignancies). There have been cases of certain kinds of cancer in patients receiving ORENCIA. The role of ORENCIA in the development of cancer is not known.

The more frequent side effects with ORENCIA are headache, upper respiratory tract infection, sore throat, and nausea.

**Tell your doctor or healthcare professional as soon as possible** if you notice any of the following:

- feeling generally unwell, dental problems, burning sensation during urination, painful skin rash, painful skin blisters, coughing

The symptoms described above can be signs of the side effects listed below, all of which have been observed with ORENCIA in adult clinical trials:

**Frequent side effects:**

- infections of the upper airway (including infections of the nose and throat)
- infections of lungs, urinary infections, painful skin blisters (herpes), rhinitis, painful sores on the lips and in the mouth
- headache, dizziness
- high blood pressure
- cough
- abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea, upset stomach
- mouth ulcers
- rash
- fatigue, weakness
- injection site reactions
- abnormal liver function tests

**Less frequent side effects:**

- tooth infection, nail fungal infection, collection of pus under the skin
- vaginal or oral thrush
- infection in and around your womb
- infection in your bladder
- skin cancer
- low blood platelet count, low white blood cells count
- depression, anxiety
- numbness
- reduced vision, eye inflammation
- palpitation, rapid heart rate, low heart rate
- low blood pressure, hot flush, flushing

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Each pre-filled syringe contains 125 mg abatacept

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- gastrointestinal infections
- increased tendency to bruise, dry skin, hair loss
- painful joints, pain in extremities
- absence of menstruation
- flu-like illness, increased weight

If you notice any side effects not mentioned in this leaflet, please inform your doctor or pharmacist.

**Reporting of side effects**

If you get side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. You can also report side effects to SAHPRA via the Med Safety APP (Medsafety X SAHPRA) and eReporting platform ([who.umc.org](http://who.umc.org)) found on SAHRPA website. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of ORENCIA.

For reporting of side effects directly to the Holder of Certificate of Registration, email:

[pharmacovigilance@equitypharma.co.za](mailto:pharmacovigilance@equitypharma.co.za)

**5. How to store ORENCIA 125 mg**

Store all medicines out of reach of children.

Protect the prefilled syringes from light by storing in the original package until time of use.

ORENCIA must be refrigerated at 2 °C to 8 °C.

Do not freeze ORENCIA.

Do not use after the expiry date stated on the container.

Return unused medicine to your pharmacist.

Do not dispose of unused medicines in drains or sewerage systems (e.g. toilets).

Refer to the “Instructions for preparing and giving a subcutaneous injection of ORENCIA” at the end of this leaflet, for advice on how to dispose of prefilled syringes and needles.

## **6. Contents of the pack and other information**

### **What ORENCIA 125 mg contains**

The active substance is abatacept.

The other ingredients are: anhydrous disodium phosphate, sodium phosphate monobasic monohydrate, sucrose, poloxamer 188, water for injection.

### **What ORENCIA 125 mg looks like and contents of the pack**

ORENCIA solution for subcutaneous injection: Clear, colourless to pale yellow, slightly opalescent solution, essentially free from visible particles.

ORENCIA solution for subcutaneous injection is supplied as a sterile, preservative-free, ready-to-use solution for injection under the skin. The injection solution is supplied either:

- in a single-dose disposable prefilled glass syringe with a passive needle safety guard and flange extenders, or
- in a single-dose disposable prefilled glass syringe with flange extenders.

The Type I glass syringe has a coated stopper and fixed stainless steel needle covered with a rigid needle shield. A sufficient excess of abatacept is included into each syringe to account for needle-syringe losses so that 1,0 ml of solution containing 125 mg abatacept can be injected under the skin. Both presentations are packed in cartons containing four pre-filled syringes.

### **Holder of Certificate of Registration**

Equity Pharmaceuticals (Pty) Ltd\*

100 Sovereign Drive

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Nellmapius Drive

Irene, Pretoria

Tel no: 012 345 1747

**The leaflet was last revised in**

*24 March 2026*

**Registration number**

47/3.1/0467

\*ORENCIA is a trademark of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, used under license by Equity Pharmaceuticals (Pty) Ltd.

**Access to the corresponding Professional Information**

An electronic copy of the Professional Information (PI) is available on the Equity website <http://www.equitypharmaceuticals.co.za> or <http://www.sahpra.org.za>.

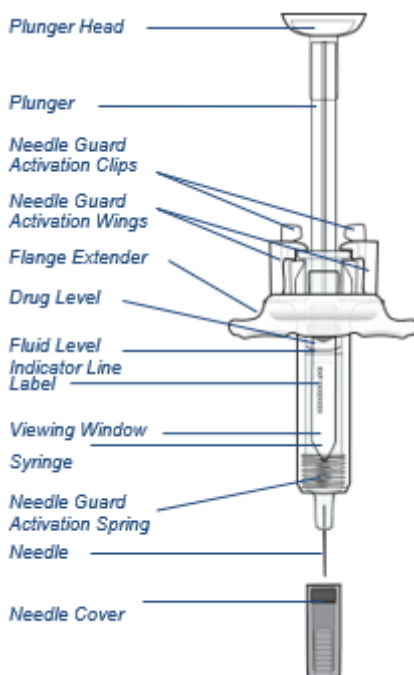
An electronic copy of the translated Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) is available on the Equity website <http://www.equitypharmaceuticals.co.za>

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Each pre-filled syringe contains 125 mg abatacept

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AND GIVING A SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTION OF ORENCIA**

The following instructions explain how to give yourself an injection of ORENCIA using the prefilled syringe or the prefilled syringe with needle guard. Please read the instructions carefully and follow them step by step. You will be instructed by your doctor, nurse or healthcare professional on the technique of self-injection. Do not attempt to self-inject until you are sure that you understand how to prepare and give the injection. After proper training, the injection can be self-administered or given by another person, for example a family member or friend.

**ORENCIA prefilled syringe with needle guard:****Figure 1a**

- Always handle the syringe carefully, especially when you are around other people, children and animals.

**Before you use ORENCIA prefilled syringe with needle guard**

Do

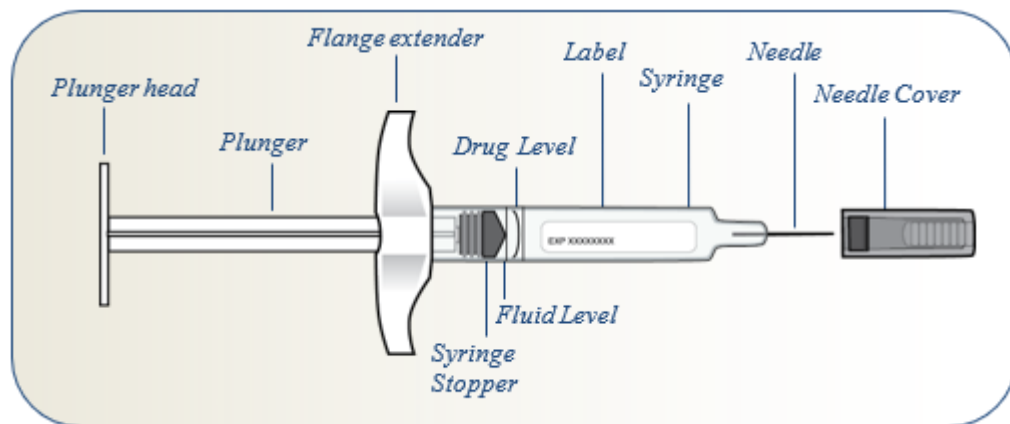
- Always hold the syringe by its body.
- Store unused syringes in the refrigerator in the original carton.
- Have your additional injection supplies ready prior to injection.
- Supplies checklist: Alcohol swab, cotton ball or gauze, adhesive bandage, and Sharps container.

Don't

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- Do not pull by the plunger or the needle cover when removing the syringe from the tray.
- Do not remove the needle cover until you are ready to inject.
- Do not pull back on the plunger at any time.
- Do not shake the ORENCIA syringe, as this may damage the medicine.

**ORENCIA prefilled syringe:****Figure 1b**

- Always handle the syringe carefully, especially when you are around other people, children and animals.

**Before you use ORENCIA prefilled syringe****Do**

- Always hold the syringe by its body.
- Store unused syringes in the refrigerator in the original carton.
- Have your additional injection supplies ready prior to injection.
- Supplies checklist: Alcohol swab, cotton ball or gauze, adhesive bandage, and Sharps container.

**Don't**

- Do not remove the needle cover until you are ready to inject.
- Do not pull back on the plunger at any time.
- Do not shake the ORENCIA syringe, as this may damage the medicine.
- **DO NOT** recap used needle.

**STEP 1: Get your syringe ready****A. Check the expiration date**

- The expiration date can be found on the ORENCIA carton and on each syringe.

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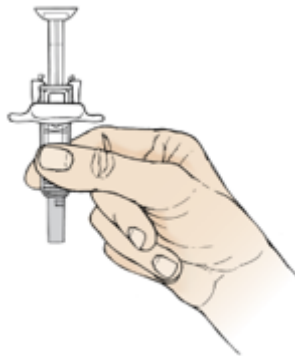
- If the expiration date has passed, do not use the prefilled syringe. Please contact your doctor or pharmacist for assistance.

B. Let it warm up for 30 to 60 minutes

- Find a comfortable space with a clean, flat working surface.
- Prefilled syringe with needle guard: To properly remove the syringe from the package, grasp the body as indicated by the arrows in the tray.
- Remove the syringe from the refrigerator. Keep remaining unused syringes in their original carton and keep in refrigerator.
- Inspect the syringe for obvious flaws, **but do not remove needle cover.**
- Allow the syringe to rest at room temperature for at least 30 to 60 minutes prior to injection.
- Do not speed the warming process in any way, such as using the microwave or placing the syringe in warm water.

C. Check the liquid in the prefilled syringe with needle guard

Hold your ORENCIA prefilled syringe by the body with the covered needle pointing down.



**Figure 2a**

- Look at the liquid through the viewing window of your prefilled syringe (see Figure 2a). The liquid in your syringe should be clear to pale yellow. Do not inject if the liquid is cloudy, discoloured, or has large particles.
- It is normal to see an air bubble, and there is no reason to remove it. All contents of the syringe should be injected.

C. Check the liquid in the prefilled syringe

Hold your ORENCIA prefilled syringe by the body with the covered needle pointing down.



**Figure 2b**

- Look at the liquid through the viewing window of your prefilled syringe (see Figure 2b). The liquid in your syringe should be clear to pale yellow. Do not inject if the liquid is cloudy, discoloured, or has large particles.
- It is normal to see an air bubble, and there is no reason to remove it. All contents of the syringe should be injected.

D. Gather your additional supplies and keep them within easy reach.

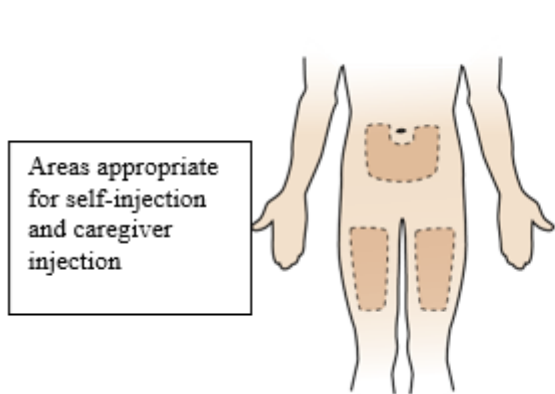
E. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

### **STEP 2: Choose and prepare a section on your body for the injection (injection site)**

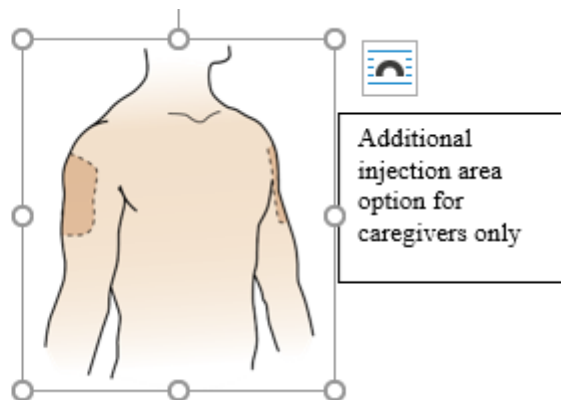
Have your ORENCIA prefilled syringe with needle guard or your ORENCIA prefilled syringe ready for use immediately after preparing the injection site.

A. Choose your injection site

- The front of the thigh is a recommended injection area. You may use your abdomen except for the 5 cm area around the navel (see Figure 3).
- The outer area of the upper arms may also be used only if the injection is being given by a caregiver. Do not attempt to use the upper arm area by yourself (see Figure 4).
- Choose a different injection site for each new injection. You may use the same thigh for weekly injections, as long as each injection is approximately 2,5 cm apart from the last time you injected yourself in that area.
- Do not inject into areas where your skin is tender, bruised, red, scaly, or hard. Avoid any areas with scars or stretch marks.



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

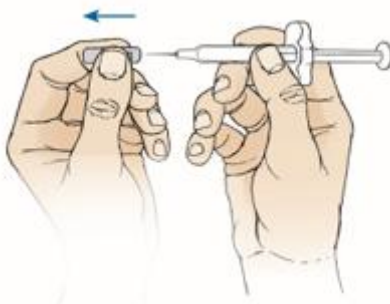
**B. Prepare your injection site**

- Wipe the injection site with an alcohol swab in a circular motion.
- Let your skin dry before injecting. Do not touch the injection site again before giving the injection.
- Do not fan or blow on the clean area.

**STEP 3: Inject ORENCIA prefilled syringe with needle guard**

**A. Remove the needle cover.**

- Do not touch the plunger while you remove the needle cover.
- Hold the body of the ORENCIA prefilled syringe with one hand and pull the needle cover straight off with your other hand (see Figure 5a).
- **Do not remove the needle cover until you are ready to inject ORENCIA. Inject ORENCIA as soon as possible after removing the needle cover.**



**Figure 5a**

- There may be a small air bubble in the syringe tube containing the medication. There is no need to remove the air bubble.
- You may notice a drop of fluid leaving the needle. This is normal and will not affect your dose.
- Do not touch the needle or let it touch any surfaces.

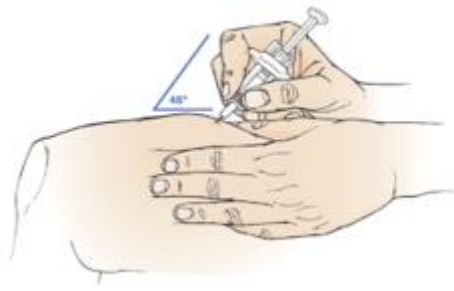
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Each pre-filled syringe contains 125 mg abatacept

- Do not use the prefilled syringe if it is dropped without the needle cover in place.

**B. Position the prefilled syringe and inject ORENCIA**

- Hold the body of your prefilled syringe in one hand between the thumb and index finger (see Figure 6a).
- Do not apply pressure to the plunger head until you are ready to begin your injection.
- Do not pull back on the plunger of the syringe at any time.
- Use your other hand and gently pinch the area of skin you cleaned. Hold firmly.
- Use a quick, dart-like motion to insert the needle into the pinched skin at a 45 ° angle (see Figure 6a).

**Figure 6a****Figure 7a**

- To inject all of the medicine, use your thumb to push the plunger until the plunger head is completely between the needle guard sides (see Figure 7a).
- When the plunger is pushed in as far as it will go, continue to apply pressure to the plunger head.
- Slowly lift your thumb from the plunger head. This allows the empty syringe to move up until the entire needle is covered by the needle guard (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

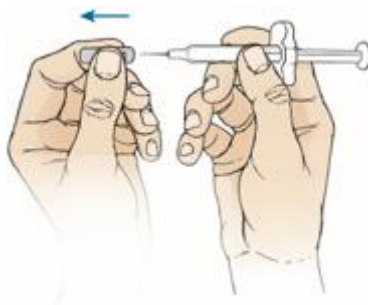
- Once the needle is completely covered by the needle guard, remove it and let go of the surrounding skin.
- Press a cotton ball over the injection site and hold for 10 seconds.
  - Do not rub the injection site. Slight bleeding is normal.

- If needed, you may apply a small adhesive bandage to the injection site.

### STEP 3: Inject ORENCIA prefilled syringe

#### A. Remove the needle cover.

- Do not touch the plunger while you remove the needle cover.
- Hold the body of the ORENCIA prefilled syringe with one hand and pull the needle cover straight off with your other hand (see Figure 5b).
- **Do not remove the needle cover until you are ready to inject ORENCIA. Inject ORENCIA as soon as possible after removing the needle cover.**

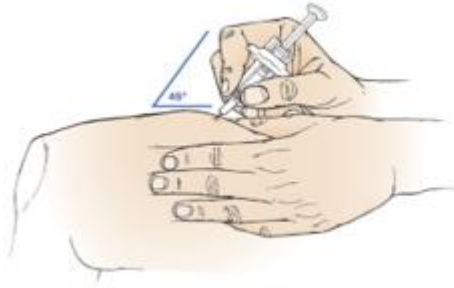


**Figure 5b**

- There may be a small air bubble in the syringe tube containing the medication. There is no need to remove the air bubble.
- You may notice a drop of fluid leaving the needle. This is normal and will not affect your dose.
- Do not touch the needle or let it touch any surfaces.
- Do not use the prefilled syringe if it is dropped without the needle cover in place.

#### B. Position the prefilled syringe and inject ORENCIA

- Hold the body of your prefilled syringe in one hand between the thumb and index finger (see Figure 6b).
- Do not apply pressure to the plunger head until you are ready to begin your injection.
- Do not pull back on the plunger of the syringe at any time.
- Use your other hand and gently pinch the area of skin you cleaned. Hold firmly.
- Use a quick, dart-like motion to insert the needle into the pinched skin at a 45° angle (see Figure 6b).



**Figure 6b**



**Figure 7b**

- To inject all of the medicine, use your thumb to push the plunger until the plunger head completely bottoms out and is pushed in as far as it will go. Remove the needle from the skin and let go of the surrounding skin (see Figure 7b).
- **DO NOT** recap needle.
- Press a cotton ball over the injection site and hold for 10 seconds.
  - Do not rub the injection site. Slight bleeding is normal.
  - If needed, you may apply a small adhesive bandage to the injection site.

#### **STEP 4: Disposal and recordkeeping**

A. Dispose of your used syringe in a Sharps container.

- Be careful when discarding the prefilled syringe after use.
- Sharps containers are special puncture-resistant disposal bins that can be purchased at many retail outlets.



Sharps Container

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- Always keep your Sharps container out of reach of children and animals.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about state and local laws regarding the proper disposal of medical products that contain needles.
- Do not throw away your used prefilled syringes in your household waste, drains or recycling bins.

B. Record your injection

- Write down the date, time, and specific part of your body where you injected yourself. It may also be helpful to write down any questions or concerns about the injection so you can ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.