

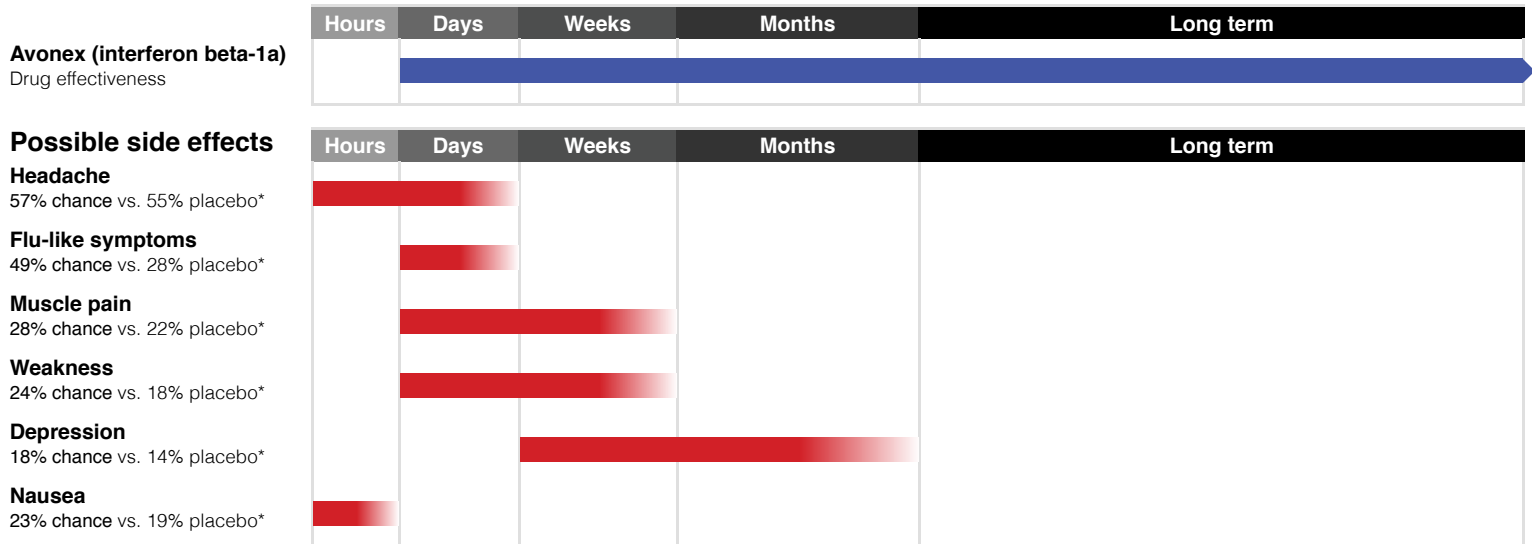
Avonex (interferon beta-1a) basics

Powered by
IODINE

Lowers the frequency of multiple sclerosis flares and delays disability. Avonex (interferon beta-1a) helps manage multiple sclerosis by reducing flare ups and increasing periods of remission in between, but it may not work for all people.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



* Placebo is a sugar pill with no medicinal benefit.

Tips from pharmacists

- Avonex (interferon beta-1a) is given as an injection once weekly into your muscle. If you're giving yourself injections, rotate the places where you inject in order to avoid skin reactions.
- Don't inject into skin that is irritated, reddened, bruised, infected, or scarred in any way. Check the injection site after 2 hours for redness, swelling, or tenderness. Tell your doctor if you have a skin reaction that does not clear up in a few days.
- The vials should be used right after mixing, or stored in a refrigerator for up to 6 hours for later use. Dispose of injectors and syringes after use. Don't re-use.
- Talk to your doctor before you drink alcohol while on Avonex (interferon beta-1a).
- You can bleed more easily while taking Avonex (interferon beta-1a). Be careful to avoid injury and use a soft toothbrush.
- Some forms of Avonex (interferon beta-1a) contain albumin and latex. Let your doctor know if you have allergies.

Risks and warnings

Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Suicidal thoughts or behavior

Avonex (interferon beta-1a) may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts or behavior. Caregivers and family members should watch for worsening depression or unusual changes in mood/behavior, especially during the first few months of treatment or dose changes. Tell your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms.

Liver damage

Avonex (interferon beta-1a) can cause liver injury. Your doctor may request regular blood tests to check your liver. Speak to your doctor right away if you experience appetite or weight loss, stomach discomfort, vomiting, dark urine, yellowing of skin/eyes, or changes in stool color.

Risk of worsening heart function

Rarely, Avonex (interferon beta-1a) can worsen symptoms in people with heart failure and cause worsened heart function in people who haven't had heart problems. Speak to your doctor right away if experience shortness of breath, fatigue, swelling in the limbs, irregular heartbeats, sudden weight gain, or persistent coughing.