

[FDA approves first treatment for primary progressive MS](#)



New medication Ocrevus also shows benefits in relapsing forms of MS.

by **Marcella Durand**

For people with relapsing multiple sclerosis—any type of MS that involves relapses—the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s March 28 approval of Ocrevus™ (ocrelizumab, Genentech, a member of the Roche Group) adds another option to an expanding toolbox of treatments.

But for people with primary progressive MS (PPMS), the FDA approval marks an important first: It is the first time a treatment has been approved specifically for people with that form of the disease.

“This represents a significant milestone,” says Kathy Costello, associate vice president of Healthcare Access at the National MS Society.

How it works

Ocrevus is FDA-approved as a first-line treatment for relapsing MS and PPMS, administered every six months via intravenous infusion after an initial treatment of two doses separated by two weeks. It is a monoclonal antibody that targets specific types of B cells, a type of immune cell believed to play a role in the damage to brain and spinal cord tissues in MS.

Side effects may include infusion-related reactions, infections and possible increased risk for

some cancers.

A step forward

Another important breakthrough for Ocrevus is its price: Genentech is setting the list price of Ocrevus at \$65,000 per year, nearly 20 percent below the current market average for an MS treatment.

This may change industry dynamics so more people with MS can better access needed treatments.

Learn about [Ocrevus' efficacy, side effects and more.](#)