

METHOTREXATE

Methotrexate (MTX) is an oral immunosuppressant medication used to treat psoriasis since its FDA-approval in 1971. MTX has also been used to treat psoriatic arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, and a variety of other indications.

Who is a candidate for methotrexate?

Methotrexate may be used alone or in combination with other psoriasis treatments. The following are contraindications for MTX:

- Pregnancy (both women and men must avoid if attempting pregnancy)
- Liver disease, such as cirrhosis, hepatitis, fatty liver
- Blood disorders, including anemia
- Active infection
- Excessive alcohol intake
- HIV

Side Effects

- Most common: nausea, fatigue, headache, loss of appetite, insomnia, anemia
- Less common: sun sensitivity (sunburn), cough (lung fibrosis), vomiting, fever, easy bruising/bleeding.
- MTX has many drug interactions. Please check the list below and inform anyone prescribing these medications that you are taking methotrexate.

Please inform your doctor if you develop any side effects.

Lab Monitoring

Due to the potential for serious side effects, we will check bloodwork before starting the medication and regularly (every 1-3 months) while on the medication. These labs may include: TB, hepatitis B/C, HIV, CBC, CMP, lipid panel, and pregnancy test (if indicated).

Gastroenterology Referral

The longer you take MTX, the higher your risk for liver damage. Thus, once you reach a cumulative dose of 3,000mg (after years of treatment), we will refer you to a gastroenterologist (GI) doctor for evaluation. They may do labs, liver scan, and/or biopsy to check the liver.

How to take MTX:

MTX is taken once weekly. Pick a day to take your methotrexate, then divide the prescribed dose in half. MTX comes in 2.5 mg tablets and will be prescribed to equal a total dose usually between 10-25mg.

EXAMPLE: You are prescribed MTX 15mg weekly. This is equivalent to 6 pills weekly. Pick a day to take your MTX and on that day, take 3 pills in the morning and 3 pills at night. All other days, continue folic acid.

MTX is also available as an injectable solution that comes in 2mL vials. Many patients experience stomach upset after taking MTX; make sure you take the medication on a full stomach. Store the medication at room temperature. Do not share your MTX. Limit alcohol intake while on MTX, as it can increase your risk of liver damage.

Folic acid:

A prescription for folic acid will also be sent for you. Take folic acid 1mg all days and 2mg on the day you take MTX to help reduce potential side effects.

Your MTX day: SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

Your MTX dose: _____ mg weekly = _____ pills total (_____ in the morning, _____ in the evening)

DRUG INTERACTIONS WITH METHOTREXATE:

****Please inform our office if you have been prescribed any new medication(s). All interactions must be checked prior to starting.**

- Aspirin (OK to take daily aspirin of 81mg or 325mg)
- Barbiturates
- Cephalosporins (Keflex)
- Chloramphenicol
- Colchicine
- Dipyridamole (Persantine)
- NSAIDs (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin, Aleve, Ibuprofen, etc.)
- Penicillins
- Phenylbutazone (AZAloid, Butazolidin, Butazone)
- Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- Probenecid
- **Sulfamethoxazole/Trimethoprim (Bactrim/Sulfa)**
- **Sulfonamides (Sulfasalazine, Sulfisoxazole, Co-trimoxazole, Sulfadiazine, Sulfamethoxazole)**
- Tetracycline
- **No live virus vaccinations (MMR, Zostavax®, yellow fever)**

SUMMARY:

1. Follow all instructions for taking MTX. Please call the office if you have any questions.
2. Labs and office visits must be followed as directed.
3. MTX has many drug interactions. Please inform any prescribers that you are taking MTX.
4. Limit alcohol intake.
5. **DO NOT GET PREGNANT.** Both men and women who are attempting pregnancy should not take MTX. If you discover you are pregnant, please stop the medication immediately and notify the office.