



# Methotrexate



Changi  
General Hospital  
SingHealth

# What is methotrexate?

Methotrexate is a well-established treatment for a number of skin problems e.g. psoriasis, eczema, pemphigoid, dermatomyositis etc. It may take several weeks before you notice any improvement in the skin condition.

## When should I take methotrexate?

Methotrexate is usually taken in tablet form **ONCE A WEEK**, on the same day each week. It should be taken with food. The tablet should be swallowed whole and not crushed or chewed. Check the dose and strength before consumption.

### Possible side effects of methotrexate:

#### ➔ Bone marrow damage

easy bruising, bleeding, increased tendency to infections, anaemia leading to fatigue

#### ➔ Cirrhosis of liver

in addition to regular blood tests, liver biopsies are necessary to monitor this effect

#### ➔ Gastrointestinal

nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea

#### ➔ Skin

rashes, mouth ulcers, hair loss

#### ➔ Inflammation of the lung

a rare complication leading to breathlessness

## Why you need regular blood tests?

Methotrexate reduces the production of blood cells and this can make you more vulnerable to infections.

While taking methotrexate, regular blood monitoring of the blood counts and liver function is important. This is usually done every 2 to 12 weeks. Your doctor may increase or decrease the number of tablets you take at each dose depending on the results of your tests and the efficacy of the tablets.

## Things to tell your doctor immediately

If you have any of the following:

- ➔ infections including fever, chills or sore throat
- ➔ unexplained skin rash, ulcerations or soreness of skin
- ➔ yellowing of the skin or generalised itching
- ➔ bleeding gums, black tarry stools or unexpected bleeding or bruising
- ➔ chest pain, difficulty breathing or a dry, persistent cough
- ➔ sore mouth or mouth ulcers
- ➔ severe and continuing diarrhoea, vomiting or stomach pains

## Taking other medicines

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicine. This includes medicines you can buy at the pharmacy such as aspirin, paracetamol, other painkillers and medicines for cough, colds and flu e.g. antibiotics. This applies to herbal and alternative remedies as these can react with methotrexate and affect your treatment.

## Drinking alcohol

Alcohol can react with methotrexate and cause liver damage so it is advisable not to drink.

## Having a baby

Methotrexate can reduce fertility in men and women. It can also cause birth defects in an unborn child.

For women, you should not take methotrexate if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning for a family. It is recommended that you wait for at least six months after finishing your treatment, before trying for a baby.

For men, it is recommended that you wait for at least six months after finishing your treatment, before trying to father a child, as your sperm can be affected.

## Vaccinations

Your doctor or nurse should not offer you any immunisation injections that have any of the live vaccines such as polio and rubella (German measles). However, flu vaccines are safe.



Singapore  
General Hospital



Changi  
General Hospital



Sengkang  
General Hospital



KK Women's and  
Children's Hospital



National Cancer  
Centre Singapore



National Dental  
Centre Singapore



National Heart  
Centre Singapore



National  
Neuroscience Institute



Singapore National  
Eye Centre



SingHealth  
Community Hospitals



Polyclinics  
SingHealth

**PATIENTS. AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.®**

2 Simei Street 3 Singapore 529889

Tel: 6788 8833 Fax: 6788 0933

Reg No 198904226R

### **CGH Appointment Centre**

For appointments and enquiries,  
please call: (65) 6850 3333

Operating hours:

8.30 am to 8.00 pm (Monday to Friday)

8.30 am to 12.30 pm (Saturday & Sunday)

Closed on Public Holidays

For more information, please visit [www.cgh.com.sg](http://www.cgh.com.sg)



Like us on  
**Facebook**  
Changi General Hospital

Information is correct at the time of printing (November 2018) and subject to revision without prior notice.

All information provided within this publication is intended for general information and is provided on the understanding that no surgical and medical advice or recommendation is being rendered.

Please do not disregard the professional advice of your doctor.