

Mycophenolate mofetil

Rheumatology Department Patient Information Leaflet

Please keep this information in a safe place

Introduction

Mycophenolate mofetil is in a family of drugs called disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Whilst your specialist will suggest the drug he feels is best to treat you at the time, based on research and extensive knowledge of the drug, you will always have the choice to discuss other treatment options and alternative therapies.

What is mycophenolate?

Mycophenolate is used in conditions where there is a need to dampen down over activity in the immune system, such as in patients with kidney disease or diseases like systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis that affect the whole body.

Mycophenolate is currently only licensed for use in the UK in people who have had a kidney transplant, to prevent rejection of the new kidney. However, there is increasing medical evidence that it is useful in controlling SLE and some forms of vasculitis which have not responded to other drugs.

It may be used in combination with your other medication and is always given under the close supervision of your hospital doctor/nurse, or in some cases, your GP. As mycophenolate is currently not licensed for use in vasculitis and SLE, your consultant will need to obtain special permission to use the drug. He will issue your prescriptions on a one to three monthly basis for collection from the hospital. Your consultant will discuss these regulations and arrangements with you in more detail.

How do I take mycophenolate?

This medication comes in the form of tablets. You will need to take it as directed, usually twice daily ideally on an empty stomach, one hour before or two hours after meals.

Swallow this medication whole. Do not crush, chew or open the tablet. Continue taking this medication for the full time as prescribed. Do not increase your dose or stop taking this drug without consulting your hospital doctor/nurse.

How long will it take for mycophenolate to work?

Mycophenolate can take up six to eight weeks to work. There may be further improvement up to six months after starting the treatment.

Will I get any side effects?

Like all medication, side effects can occur. Mycophenolate will be started at a low dose which is then increased to minimise the risk of side effects.

The most serious side effect is a decrease in the body's ability to protect against infection. You should tell your consultant immediately if you develop signs of infection (such as persistent sore throat or fever), weight loss, night sweats or if you can feel that you have enlarged lymph nodes/glands.

Other possible side effects

This medication may also cause dizziness, drowsiness, headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, flatulence, tremors, sweating, flushing, insomnia, muscle pain, a rash, mood changes or vision changes. Most of these side effects can be helped by reducing the dose of mycophenolate for a short period of time.

Rarer side effects include unusual weakness, unusual or easy bruising, swollen glands, skin changes (due to a slight increase in sensitivity to the sun), chest pain (angina), swelling of the hands or feet or difficulty breathing. **Contact your hospital doctor or nurse immediately if you develop any of these symptoms.**

How often will I need blood tests?

As with many other drugs, when you are taking mycophenolate you will need to be monitored closely.

You will, therefore, need to have a blood test every week initially until you have been on the same dose for eight weeks, and then once a month after that.

It is your responsibility to have these blood tests. In order for us to receive the results from your blood tests, you will have to have them at any of the following centres:

Russells Hall Hospital:

Monday	8am to 7.30pm
Tuesday	5pm to 7.30pm
Wednesday	8am to 7.30pm
Thursday	12noon to 7.30pm
Friday	12noon to 7.30pm
Saturday	8am to 10am

No appointments required.

Corbett Outpatient Centre: Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. No appointments required.

Netherton Health Centre: Appointment required, ring 01384 366500.

Cross Street Health Centre: Appointment required, ring 01384 366257.

Ladies Walk Clinic: Appointment required, ring 01902 575103.

Can I take other medicine with mycophenolate?

Tell your consultant about any over-the-counter and all prescription drugs that you are taking, including antacids, aspirin, theophylline, phenytoin, cholestyramine, probenecid, acyclovir or ganciclovir. Do not start or stop any medicine without approval from your consultant, nurse or pharmacist.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on with your usual dosing schedule. Do not 'double-up' the dose to catch up. If you miss more than a few days of mycophenolate, contact your consultant to establish a new dosing schedule.

When should I not take the medication?

This medication should not be used during pregnancy. It is suggested that you use contraception before beginning the therapy and for at least six weeks after this medication is stopped. Please discuss the risks and benefits of the drug with your consultant.

There is no research available about whether this medication appears in breast milk so please consult your hospital doctor/nurse before breast feeding.

Can I have immunisations or vaccines whilst on mycophenolate?

You should not have 'live' vaccines – these include vaccines for polio, shingles and rubella (German measles). You can have the seasonal flu vaccine and you may be advised to have a pneumonia vaccine. Always let your GP know that you are having mycophenolate before having a vaccination.

What alternatives are there to this treatment?

You do not have to take this treatment and can always discuss alternatives with the rheumatology department. Some people find that complementary therapy treatment is useful and leaflets about this, provided by Arthritis Research Council, are available in our clinics.

Over-the-counter medications may be used alone or in combination with prescribed medication you are taking; however, you are always advised to discuss these with your consultant before taking them. Medication bought over the counter may help to control your pain but **not** always the condition. Always tell the pharmacist which prescribed medications you are already taking when buying over-the-counter drugs.

Remember, whilst you are on this medication, it is your responsibility to ensure you have regular blood tests and it is important that you do not miss any of these tests. If your hospital appointment is rescheduled, contact the rheumatology helpline if you need more blood forms.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following:

Arthritis Care

Tel: 0808 800 4050

Website: www.arthritiscare.org.uk

NHS Choices

Website: www.nhs.uk

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Rheumatology helpline on 01384 244789 (this is an answer machine so please do not use this helpline in an emergency)

or speak to your pharmacist

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/rheumatology/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510

निकर एड एडिबलेंट (डिटा एडिबलेंट) ब्रुसो आपनी ब्रासा (पुनारी) विंच लैला चाहुंटे रो डा ब्रिपा बर बे पेंसट एडिबलेंट बें-ऑरडीनेटर नाल 0800 0730510 टेलीफोन नंबर उे संघर बरे।

यदि आपकी यह दस्तावेज अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो पेशान्त इनफरमेशन की-आरडीनेटर की टेलीफोन नंबर 0800 0730510 पर फोन करें।

જો તમને આ પત્રિકા તમારી પોતાની ભાષા (સુજ્ઞાતી)માં જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને પેશન્ટ ઈન્ફર્મેશન કી-ઓર્ડિનેટરનો 0800 0730510 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

আপনি যদি এই প্রচারপত্রটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে পেশেন্ট ইনফরমেশন কো-অর্ডিনেটরের সাথে 0800 0730510 এই নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

إذا كنت ترغب هذه الورقة مترجمة بلغتك الأصلية (اللغة العربية)، فرجاءاً اتصل بمسئول المعلومات للمريض
0800 0730510 على التلغون Information Co-ordinator

حیث ضرورت اسلیقوت کوئی زبان (آورد) میں حاصل کرنے کے لیے روبرو پائی ٹیلیفون نمبر 0800 0730510 پر وقت انٹرمیشن کو-آرڈینیشن (مریضوں کے معلومات کی فراہمی کے سطح میں) کے ساتھ رابطہ کریں۔