

Date:

Dose prescribed by your doctor:

Methotrexate

How this medication works

Methotrexate is a medication that acts on the immune system to decrease inflammation. It is used in children who have juvenile idiopathic arthritis, psoriasis, or other chronic inflammatory conditions. The doses (amounts) of methotrexate that are used for these conditions are much lower than the doses used to treat cancer.

Methotrexate starts to work in 6 to 8 weeks, but it may take up to 3 months to see the full benefits of this medication.

Check with your doctor before taking this medication if you have:

- An allergy to methotrexate
- Liver problems
- Never had chicken pox or the vaccine against chicken pox

How to take this medication

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor. The dose (amount to take) is based on your weight and condition. Do not change the dose without talking to your doctor.

Methotrexate is taken once a week, either by mouth or by an injection into the skin. Methotrexate pills should be taken with water on an empty stomach: either 1 hour before eating or 2 hours after food.

Methotrexate is often given on a Friday or Saturday evening. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember.

Folic acid is a B vitamin that helps to reduce the side effects of methotrexate. It may be taken as a small dose every day or as a larger dose once a week (the day after taking methotrexate). Your doctor will explain how to take folic acid.

While taking this medication you may notice

Some possible side effects include:

- Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain for 24 to 48 hours after the dose
 - Feeling tired for 24 to 48 hours after the dose
 - Feeling unwell for up to 24 hours after the dose
 - Mouth sores
 - Low white blood cell counts
 - High liver enzyme levels
 - Skin is more sensitive to the sun and may develop dark spots
 - Reaction in the lungs
- } These side effects are less common
- } These side effects are rare

What to remember while taking this medication

Methotrexate may make it harder for your body to fight infections. It is best to skip your next dose of methotrexate if you have a fever or think you have an infection.

You will need regular blood tests to check your white blood cell counts and your liver enzymes while taking this medication.

Drinking alcohol while taking methotrexate may harm your liver. It is important to avoid alcohol while taking this medication.

Methotrexate may harm an unborn baby if it is taken during pregnancy and is not considered safe while breastfeeding. It is important not to get pregnant or breastfeed while taking this medication.

If you develop a rash that looks like chicken pox, please call your doctor right away.

Methotrexate may interact with sulfa antibiotics, such as cotrimoxazole (also known as trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, Septra[®], Sulfatrim[®], or Bactrim[®]). Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting a new medication.

It is safe to take methotrexate while taking NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) like naproxen, indomethacin or ibuprofen.