

Methotrexate

[Meth-o-TREX-ate]

Trexall, Folex PFS, Rheumatrex Dose Pack, Methotrexate Sodium

<http://Rheuminfo.com>
your rheumatology resource

How to use this medication

What is it



Methotrexate is a medication used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. While taking this medicine it is important to have your blood tests done and see your doctor on a regular basis.

Take it only once a week



Take your methotrexate only **once a week**. Choose the same day of the week to be your "Methotrexate Day".

Tablets or injection



Methotrexate comes in tablets or in a liquid that can be injected. The normal dose is 7.5 to 25 mg per week. Store your methotrexate in a safe, cool, dry place.

Be patient



It will take 6 to 8 weeks for the methotrexate to work. It is important for you to keep taking the medicine.

What you need to do

Avoid alcohol



Drinking alcohol while taking methotrexate could harm your liver. It is best to avoid alcohol.

Don't get pregnant or breastfeed



Methotrexate can harm an unborn child. If you are having sex or thinking of having sex and could get pregnant, it is important to use birth control. We recommend the birth control pill.

Stop if you have an infection



Methotrexate can make it harder for you to fight infections. It is best to stop taking methotrexate if you have a fever or think you have an infection. Phone your doctor for advice.

Get regular blood tests



Have your blood tested **every 4-8 weeks**. This is important to make sure methotrexate isn't harming your liver or blood counts.

Side effects & important facts

Nausea & feeling unwell



The most common side effect of methotrexate is nausea, feeling unwell, or feeling tired for 24 to 48 hours after the dose. This usually gets better over time as you get used to the medication.

Rare reaction in the lungs



Methotrexate rarely causes a serious lung problem. Call your doctor and **stop** taking your methotrexate if you have:

- New shortness of breath (while resting) but don't have a heavy cold (runny nose and fever)
- A new dry cough for several weeks

Drug interactions



You must not take **sulfa antibiotics**, such as co-trimoxazole (Septra) or trimethoprim, while taking methotrexate. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting a new medicine.

When should I call my doctor

Please call if you need to stop



- If you feel sick and want to stop
- If you are concerned about any side effects
- If you want to or have already stopped the medicine

Other reasons to call your doctor:



Cough or Difficulty Breathing



Fever or think you have an infection



Severe Mouth Sores



Pregnant or Planning Pregnancy



If you are having surgery

Other important information

Stopping methotrexate



You can simply stop taking methotrexate. You do not need to wean off it. Please call your doctor if you stop the medication.

Folic acid (Vitamin B9)



Folic acid is a B vitamin that can help to reduce side-effects of methotrexate. Your doctor will tell you how to take folic acid.