



MYCOPHENOLATE MOFETIL

What are the aims of this leaflet?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about mycophenolate mofetil. It will tell you what it is, how it works, how it is used to treat skin conditions, and where you can find out more about it.

What is mycophenolate mofetil and how does it work?

Mycophenolate mofetil is a very powerful medicine used mainly to make kidney, heart, and liver transplants successful. However, it is also useful in a variety of skin conditions. It reduces the action of the body's own defence system (the immune system) and is one of a group of drugs known as immunosuppressive agents. It is useful if the immune system loses control and damages your own body.

Which skin conditions are treated with mycophenolate mofetil?

These include severe psoriasis, severe atopic dermatitis, blistering conditions, lupus erythematosus and pyoderma gangrenosum.

When should I take mycophenolate mofetil?

The dose is normally divided into two daily doses, and taken morning and evening.

What dose of mycophenolate mofetil should I take?

Your doctor will advise you about the appropriate dose for your condition. Mycophenolate mofetil is available in 250mg capsules and 500mg tablets. The normal dose lies between 1 and 3 grams daily.

What are the possible side effects of mycophenolate mofetil?

Although mycophenolate mofetil has been used for many years, and found to be well tolerated, occasionally it can have adverse effects. It can make you anaemic, prone to infections, or cause excessive bleeding. It can also affect the gut causing nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea, and indigestion.

Although this is uncommon, patients on long-term mycophenolate mofetil are more likely than others to develop skin cancers and so should avoid excessive exposure to sunlight. To further protect the skin it is recommended that patients should use a good quality sun cream with UVA and UVB protection; an SPF of 30+ with a five star UVA rating is recommended, and you should look for **broad spectrum** on the label. This needs to be applied at least 20 minutes before going outside and then again every 2 to 3 hours. Ensure that you coat all visible skin; the sun cream should remain visible on your skin. Do not rub it all in. If in doubt please see your doctor as they may be willing to prescribe an appropriate one for you.

When outdoors in the UK, between the hours of 11am and 3pm, from April to September, ensure you are in the shade and are wearing clothing which is thick enough to provide protection from the sun (e.g. close weave clothing or knit cotton which cannot be seen through); it is also advisable to cover as much of your skin as possible and to wear a wide-brimmed hat to shade your face, neck and ears.

How will I be monitored for the side effects of mycophenolate mofetil treatment?

Make sure you visit your doctor or nurse for regular blood checks; checks are frequent at first (e.g. weekly), but become less often as time goes on (e.g. usually every 1 to 3 months) once treatment is established. Your liver and kidney functions also need to be monitored regularly.

Does mycophenolate mofetil affect fertility or pregnancy?

You **must not** become pregnant whilst on mycophenolate mofetil, and for at least 6 weeks after stopping the drug. You should not breast feed if you are taking mycophenolate mofetil.

Can I take other medicines at the same time as mycophenolate mofetil?

Mycophenolate mofetil does not mix well with some medications and this may alter the dosage of mycophenolate mofetil that you may require. **Tell your**

doctor about all of the medicines that you are taking (whether on prescription or bought over the counter) prior to starting treatment.

Do not begin any medicine or change its dosage without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist.

Medications that can cause problems when taking mycophenolate mofetil include:

- Antacids (e.g. aluminium hydroxide and Gaviscon) can reduce the absorption of mycophenolate mofetil.
- Antiepileptic drugs such as phenytoin are less well absorbed when taken with mycophenolate mofetil.
- The tranquilliser Clozapine increases the risk of a fall in white blood cell count and lowers defence against infection.
- Mycophenolate mofetil interacts with some antiviral drugs including aciclovir and ganciclovir.
- Lipid-regulating drugs (e.g. cholestyramine) can affect the absorption of mycophenolate mofetil.

Where can I find out more about mycophenolate mofetil?

If you want to know more about mycophenolate mofetil, or if you are worried about your treatment, you should speak to your doctor or pharmacist. This information sheet does not list all of the side effects of mycophenolate mofetil.

For more details, look at the drug information sheet which comes as an insert with your prescription for mycophenolate mofetil.

This leaflet aims to provide accurate information about the subject and is a consensus of the views held by representatives of the British Association of Dermatologists: its contents, however, may occasionally differ from the advice given to you by your doctor.

This leaflet has been assessed for readability by the British Association of Dermatologists' Patient Information Lay Review Panel

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