

Patient Information Leaflet: Methotrexate for Psoriasis and Other Inflammatory Dermatological Conditions

What is Methotrexate?

Methotrexate is a medication commonly used for treating various autoimmune diseases, including psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions. It is classified as a disease-modifying antirheumatic drug (DMARD) and has been used in dermatology to help manage severe skin diseases.

How Does Methotrexate Work?

Methotrexate works by suppressing the immune system and inhibiting the production of inflammatory cells. By doing so, it helps reduce inflammation and the rapid growth of skin cells associated with conditions like psoriasis, leading to decreased plaques and improvement in skin appearance. It may take six to twelve weeks to see improvement with methotrexate.

Indications in Dermatology:

Methotrexate is prescribed for several inflammatory dermatological conditions, including:

- **Psoriasis:** Particularly effective for moderate to severe plaque psoriasis that has not responded to topical treatments or phototherapy.
- **Psoriatic Arthritis:** Used to manage joint symptoms associated with psoriasis.
- **Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis):** In some cases, it may be used for severe, resistant eczema.
- **Other Inflammatory Skin Diseases:** Such as morphea, scleroderma, sarcoidosis, pemphigoid and pemphigus.

Dosage and Administration:

- **Initial Dosage:** The starting dose of methotrexate varies based on the condition being treated, typically starting between 10-25 mg once a week.
- **Administration:** Methotrexate may be taken orally in tablet form, or it can be given as an injection (subcutaneous or intramuscular).
- **Follow-Up:** Regular follow-up appointments are necessary to adjust the dosage as needed and monitor for side effects.

Important Considerations:

- **Regular Monitoring:** Routine blood tests are required to monitor liver function, kidney function, and complete blood count while on methotrexate. This helps ensure that the medication is not causing harmful side effects.
- **Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:** Methotrexate is contraindicated during pregnancy and breastfeeding due to potential risks to the foetus or infant. Discuss family planning with your healthcare provider.
- **Alcohol Intake:** Limit or avoid alcohol consumption while on methotrexate, as it can increase the risk of liver damage.



Experts in Skin & Hair

Possible Side Effects:

While methotrexate can be effective, it can also cause side effects, including:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Mouth sores
- Fatigue or dizziness
- Hair loss
- Sensitive skin or rash

Serious Side Effects:

Seek immediate medical attention if you experience:

- Signs of liver dysfunction (e.g. jaundice, dark urine)
- Severe allergic reactions (rash, swelling, difficulty breathing)
- Signs of infections (fever, persistent sore throat)
- Unusual bruising or bleeding

Self-Care and Lifestyle Tips:

- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of fluids to stay well-hydrated.
- **Balanced Diet:** Eating a healthy diet can support your overall well-being.
- **Avoid Infections:** Be cautious of exposure to infections, as methotrexate suppresses the immune system.
- **Skin Protection:** Use sun protection measures, as some patients may be more sensitive to sun exposure.

When to Seek Medical Advice:

- If your skin condition worsens, or if you experience new or unusual symptoms that concern you.
- If you have any questions about your treatment plan, dosage, or side effects.

Conclusion:

Methotrexate is an effective medication for managing psoriasis and other inflammatory skin conditions. Proper adherence to your treatment plan and regular monitoring can help manage your condition while minimising potential risks.

For any questions or concerns regarding your treatment with methotrexate, please consult your healthcare provider or dermatologist.

