

# Mycophenolate mofetil and mycophenolate acid



## What is mycophenolate or mycophenolic acid?

- An immunosuppressant that is used to control symptoms and prevent flare-ups in diseases of the immune system such as vasculitis (inflammation in the blood vessels) or glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys).
- Mycophenolate lowers your body's harmful response to diseases of the immune system. It is often used with other medications such as prednisone.
- Mycophenolate mofetil is available as 250 mg or 500 mg capsules and is more commonly used compared to mycophenolate acid.
- Mycophenolic acid is available as 180 mg or 360 mg enteric coated tablets. The information listed below for mycophenolate is also applicable to mycophenolic acid.

## How do I use it?

- Take the medication regularly twice daily.
- Space doses 12 hours apart for maximal effect.
- The medication is best taken on an empty stomach, 1 hour before or 2 hours after eating.
- Do not take antacids (containing aluminum or magnesium) at the same time as mycophenolate.
- The capsules should be swallowed whole. Do not cut, crush or chew the capsules. Remove the capsule from the blister package just prior to use.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember if it is within six hours of your usual dosage time.
- If a dose is missed by more than six hours, skip it and go back to your normal schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose as this may increase side effects.
- Keep a diary of late or missed doses.
- It is very important to take each dose of mycophenolate because missing even a few doses may cause flare-ups of your symptoms.
- The dose of mycophenolate is specific to treat your medical condition. Do not change your dose without talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

## What side effects should I expect?

- Check your blood work regularly; this is important to detect and minimize the side effects of mycophenolate.
- Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, heartburn or diarrhea. These side effects may decrease by having smaller meals more often. Mycophenolate may also cause high blood pressure or swelling. If any of these symptoms continue or become bothersome, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Mycophenolate may decrease the production of red blood cells (anemia), white blood cells and platelets in the body. Contact your doctor if you notice any unusual tiredness, bleeding or easy bruising.
- Since mycophenolate lowers your body's ability to fight off infections, wash your

hands often and stay away from people with infections, colds or flu. Contact your doctor right away if you feel you may have a cold or other infection, e.g. if you experience high fever, chills, very bad sore throat, chest congestion, pain with passing urine, etc.

- Mycophenolate may add to your chance of getting a type of cancer called lymphoma and skin cancer. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protect you from the sun. Contact your family doctor to ensure you have the recommended screening tests performed for people of your age and sex.

### **Drug interactions with mycophenolate or mycophenolic acid**

- Mycophenolate can interact with some medications.
- You should discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medications (non- prescription and prescription), herbal products or vitamins.
- Do not receive any vaccines without talking to your doctor because the use with mycophenolate may either increase your chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.

### **Is mycophenolate or mycophenolic acid harmful during pregnancy?**

- Mycophenolate is not recommended during pregnancy as it readily crosses the placenta and can harm the fetus.
- Birth control is recommended in women of child bearing potential.
- Mycophenolate is transferred into the breast milk, therefore breastfeeding is not recommended.

### **How do I store the medication?**

- Store at room temperature away from moisture and sunlight. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep out of reach of children.

### **Reordering procedure**

- To refill your medication, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.