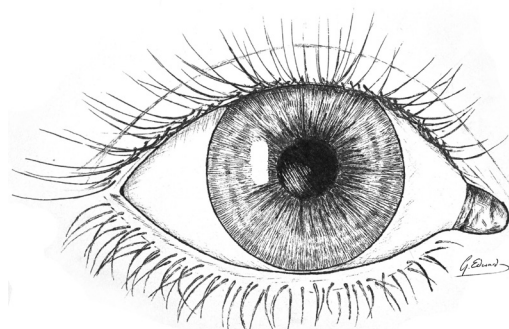


Mycophenolate

Ophthalmology



This information sheet is for patients who have been informed they require immunosuppression treatment for their eye condition.

Introduction

Mycophenolate is a drug that can help prevent your condition causing damage to your eye. You can discuss the benefits and risks of taking Mycophenolate with your healthcare professional before you start treatment, so you are able to make an informed consent.

What is it?

Mycophenolate is a type of drug which belongs to a group of medicines called "immunosuppressants". Mycophenolate is used for diseases that are called autoimmune diseases. In these diseases the body's own immune system (defence system) attacks the body's normal tissue. Mycophenolate reduces the disease activity and therefore symptom's, by reducing the activity of the body's immune system (defence system) so it is always used with care.

Why is Mycophenolate prescribed?

Your doctor has prescribed Mycophenolate for the treatment of your ocular (eye) condition. It is given to reduce the activity of your disease and can also be used to prevent inflammation within the eye. Doctors may prescribe it for people on steroid treatment so that their steroid dose can be reduced.

Mycophenolate does not work immediately. It may be up to 4 months before you notice any benefit in your symptoms and disease activity.

How and when you should take your medicine

Mycophenolate is usually taken in tablet or capsule form twice a day. Your doctor will advise you about the correct dose. The capsules or tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water. Do not break or crush them and do not take any capsules or tablets that have broken or split open.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

What are the possible side effects?

Like all medicines, Mycophenolate can have side effects; normally this treatment is tolerated well. The most common side effects you may experience are:

- Nausea, vomiting (feeling sick), which is often relieved by taking them after food.
- Nausea / diarrhoea, constipation or stomach pain
- Headache, rashes, sore mouth and mouth ulcers
- Unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Unexplained change in mood
- Unusual / frequent headaches
- Acne or a skin rash

Further information regarding side-effects

This leaflet outlines essential information that you need if you have been prescribed this medicine. Not all possible side effects have been listed above. We recommend that you read the package insert leaflet from the manufacturer that is supplied with your medicine for a full list of side effects (uncommon, serious and rare), as well as drug interactions reported for this medicine

It is important to tell your doctor if you think you may have an increased risk of side effects, or if they become troublesome, or if you notice anything unusual. See your doctor immediately if any side effects and symptoms listed get worse.

You should **not** stop taking Mycophenolate unless the doctor tells you because stopping your medicine can make your condition worse.

What should I look out for?

Very occasionally Mycophenolate can affect the liver, or the number of blood cells produced by the bone marrow. Your body's resistance to infection can be reduced while you are taking Mycophenolate, this can make you more likely to develop infections. You should tell your doctor or nurse specialist straight away if you develop any of the following after starting Mycophenolate:

- A sore throat
- A fever
- Any other symptoms of infection
- Flu-like symptoms
- Constant cough or breathing problems
- Palpitations
- Sudden weight loss
- Swollen gums or unusual taste in your mouth

If you have never had chickenpox, you should avoid close contact with people who have chickenpox or shingles. If you do come into contact with people suffering from chickenpox or shingles, see your doctor urgently. You may need antiviral treatment which your doctor will be able to prescribe.

What are the risks?

There is a slight increased risk of certain type of cancer in people using Mycophenolate. Because of the small increase in the risk of lymphoid tissue and skin cancer, you should avoid exposure to sunlight and UV light. Wear protective clothing as well as using a sunscreen with a high protection factor. Please discuss with your doctor or nurse specialist if you are worried.

Very rarely, patients treated with Mycophenolate can develop a serious condition called "Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy", also known as PML, which can damage the brain and spinal cord. You must see your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Pins and needles
- Weakness, shaky movements, unsteadiness
- Sight loss
- Speech problems
- Change in behaviour or mood
- Difficulty in moving your face, arms or legs

What monitoring will I need?

Because Mycophenolate can affect the blood count, and can sometimes cause liver or kidney problems, your doctor or nurse specialist will arrange for you to have a blood test before you start treatment and have regular blood checks while on Mycophenolate. It is very important that you have these tests performed as your treatment may be stopped unless you have regular blood tests.

Your doctor or nurse specialist will check your general condition from time to time, which may include your weight, blood pressure, blood sugar levels and urine.

Can I take other medicines with Mycophenolate?

Due to the potential risks of drug interactions with other medications, you should discuss all your current medicines you take with your Doctor before starting mycophenolate. You should always tell any other Doctor treating you that you are taking mycophenolate.

Mycophenolate is not a painkiller. If you already use painkillers, you may carry on taking these as well as your Azathioprine unless advised by your doctor.

You should not take any other medicines without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes "over-the-counter medicines", complimentary therapies and home remedies.

Will it affect immunisation?

If you are on Mycophenolate it is recommended that you must **not** have live vaccines. If you require any vaccinations it is important to check with your GP.

Yearly flu or influenza vaccines are safe and recommended. You should consult with your GP before having any vaccinations.

Can I drink alcohol or smoke while on Mycophenolate?

Since both alcohol and steroids can upset the stomach, you should just drink small amounts of alcohol or avoid it. It is also advisable to stop or reduce smoking. It is best to discuss with your healthcare professional

How can I reduce the risk of infection?

You should avoid close contact with people who have recently been in hospital or people who have viral infections. Do not eat soft cheese from unpasteurised milk. Cook-chill foods should be reheated thoroughly, and salads washed well. Visit the Food Standards Agency website www.food.gov.uk/safereheating for information on reducing your risk of infection from foods.

Does Mycophenolate affect fertility or pregnancy?

You must not take Mycophenolate during pregnancy unless clearly advised by your doctor as there is a risk to the foetus. You should use contraception before taking, whilst taking and for up to 3 months after you have stopped taking Mycophenolate (oral contraception may not be sufficient). Men are advised not to father a child during and for up to 6 months after discontinuation of treatment. Please inform your doctor straight away if you are pregnant, or plan to start a family in the near future.

Does it affect breastfeeding?

You should **not** breastfeed if you are on Mycophenolate. The drug may pass into the breast milk and could be harmful to your baby.

What if you forget to take your tablets?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose.

Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose, but wait and take your next dose at the usual time. If you have missed more than one dose, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

General information about your medicines

Medicine is an important part of your treatment. Each medicine has been individually prescribed for you and it is important that you take your medicine as you have been asked.

To avoid any problems, please do not stop or change any medicine without telling your doctor first.

If you feel that any problems you are having are possibly caused by your medicines, inform your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible.

Remember to contact your doctor before your prescription has run out to obtain further supplies.

Please return any unused medicines that are no longer needed to a pharmacy for safe disposal.

If you have any questions about your medicines please do not hesitate to contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Additional Information

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment do not hesitate to consult your GP or your Eye doctor or Nurse Specialist at the EYE Department at New Cross Hospital.

Other useful contacts

Eye Referral Unit

01902 695805

Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm

Weekends, 8am-3pm

Minor Procedures

01902 695831

Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm

Outside of these hours, please attend the main Emergency Department or contact NHS Direct on telephone number 111.

Further Information on this subject, please check the following websites:

- www.111.nhs.uk
- www.patient.co.uk/medicine
- www.medicines.org.uk/emc/browse-medicines

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。