

# Dartmouth-Hitchcock Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center

## Medication Information Sheet for Methotrexate

**Brand Names:** Rheumatrex, Immunex, Folex PFS

**Generic Name:** Methotrexate (meth oh trex' ate), Amethopterin, MTX

**Drug Class:** Antimetabolite; Folic acid antagonist; (disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug, i.e., DMARD)

### What does this medication do?

Used for the treatment of Crohn's disease by partially inhibiting (suppressing) the activity of the immune system. This medication works by decreasing inflammation, which is an underlying problem in Crohn's disease.

### Possible Side Effects:

*You will need blood work to check your liver function regularly as methotrexate may affect the liver. Your doctor will discuss lab work intervals. **Do not drink alcohol while taking methotrexate.** You will be given a lower dose than that used to treat patients with cancer so the chances of severe side effects are not as great. Methotrexate also causes depletion of the vitamin, folic acid (folate). Your doctor will prescribe folic acid replacement to prevent this from occurring.*

### Please call your doctor to discuss these milder side effects:

- Dizziness
- Hair loss
- Mild nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or loss of appetite

### Call your doctor *immediately* if you have any of these side effects:

- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Fever, chills, sore throat or other signs of infection
- Dry cough
- Mouth sores or sores or blisters on the lips
- Abdominal pain
- Uncontrollable nausea and vomiting
- Worsening diarrhea
- Yellow eyes or skin or pale (clay) colored stools or dark (tea) colored urine
- Allergic reaction (itching or hives, swelling in face or hands, swelling or tingling in the mouth or throat, tightness in your chest, trouble breathing)
- Blood in the urine, decreased amounts of urine (less than one cup per day)
- Worsening rectal bleeding or black, tarry stools
- Seizures

### Warnings:

- This medicine can cause birth defects if it is used by the mother while she is pregnant or by the father when his sexual partner becomes pregnant. If a pregnancy occurs

while you are using this medicine, tell your doctor right away. Use two forms of birth control to avoid pregnancy while you are using this medicine and for at least 3 months after your treatment ends. This is very important whether you are a man or a woman. Methotrexate will harm the fetus.

- Make sure your doctor knows if you have kidney or liver disease, HIV or AIDS, any infections, stomach ulcers, or if you drink alcohol regularly.
- This medicine may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Use a sunscreen when you are outdoors. Avoid sunlamps and tanning beds.
- You may get infections more easily while taking this medicine. Stay away from people with colds, flu, or other infections.
- Talk to your doctor before getting immunized with live virus vaccines (flu shot, measles)

### **Dosage and Administration:**

You will inject this medication subcutaneously (SQ) or intramuscularly (IM) once a week:

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- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember
  - Please notify us if you take any of these medications:
    - Sulfa drugs (Bactrim, Septra)
    - Tetracycline (AchromycinV, Sumycin)
    - Azathioprine (Imuran)
    - Isotretinoin (Accutaine) or tretinoin (Vesanoid)
    - Anticonvulsants (Phenobarbital, Phenytoin, Carbamazepine)
    - Oral hypoglycemics (Glucophage, Avandia, Glucotrol, DiaBeta)
    - Probenecid (Benemid)
    - Theophylline (Theo24, Uniphyll)