



Using Mycophenolate Mofetil to Treat Skin Conditions

CellCept

Your dermatologist has prescribed mycophenolate mofetil (MMF) to treat your skin condition. This handout explains MMF doses, monitoring, side effects, and drug interactions.

Mycophenolate mofetil (MMF) is a medicine that suppresses the immune system. It is often given to people who have had an organ transplant because it helps prevent rejection of the transplanted organ.

MMF is also effective in treating many skin conditions, even though using MMF for these conditions has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This is called “off-label” use of a medicine. Some skin conditions MMF is used to treat are severe *eczema*, *psoriasis*, *pyoderma gangrenosum*, *pemphigus vulgaris*, and *bullous pemphigoid*. Talk with your doctor about using MMF for your skin condition.

Doses

MMF comes in 250 mg capsules and 500 mg tablets. A typical starting dose might be 500 mg (1 tablet) 2 times a day. *Mycophenolic acid* (MPA) is a similar drug that is sometimes used instead of MMF. A 500 mg pill of MMF is equal to a 360 mg pill of MPA. Please read and follow the dose instructions on your prescription bottle.

When you return for your follow-up visit, your dose may be increased until you reach a stable dose that is right for your body. It usually takes 1 to 2 months to reach a stable dose.

Monitoring

We will check some basic lab tests before you start taking MMF, and we will repeat these tests every 1 to 2 weeks after you start taking it. This will tell us how well your body is handling the medicine. Once your dose is stable, we will do these tests once every 1 to 3 months.

Important Note for Women:

If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, stop taking MMF right away and call us. MMF can cause birth defects and must not be taken during pregnancy. If you are woman of child-bearing age, we will do a pregnancy test regularly while you are taking MMF.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Dermatology Center:
206-598-5065

Side Effects

Possible side effects from MMF are:

- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Constipation, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, and pain
- Mouth or stomach ulcers (sores)
- Low blood cell counts
- Having to urinate often or pain when urinating
- Tremor (shakiness) or dizziness
- Cough or chest pain
- Rash
- Back pain
- High cholesterol

Nausea, Constipation, and Diarrhea

Nausea, constipation, or diarrhea most often occur when higher doses (6 pills a day) are taken. Lowering the dose slightly often makes these symptoms go away or makes them easier to handle.

Rarely, some people develop more severe problems with their digestive system. If you have any of these side effects, talk with your doctor. You may need to stop taking MMF.

Infections

Some people may develop infections while taking MMF. Infections include sore throats, pneumonia (lung infections), and bladder or kidney infections. Sometimes these can be serious.

Call your doctor if you have:

- A fever higher than 100.4 °F (38°C)
- Chills
- An illness that lasts a long time

Drug Interactions

While you are taking MMF, avoid:

- Anti-inflammatory medicines such as *salicylates* and *probenecid* and anti-seizure medicines.
- Antacids, iron, some antibiotics, cyclosporine, Sevelamer, cholestyramine, and steroids like prednisone. These medicines make MMF less effective. If you take any of these, tell your doctor.

UW Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER

Dermatology Center
Box 354697
4225 Roosevelt Way N.E. 4th Floor
Seattle, WA 98105
206-598-4067