

Renal services

Mycophenolate (for Vasculitis)

Mycophenolate is a drug that is often used in the treatment of vasculitis. It can also be used for kidney transplantation. It is available under the brand name 'Cellcept' (mycophenolate mofetil) or "Ceptava" (mycophenolate sodium) as well as several other brands.

About your medicine

The function of immunosuppressants is to suppress the immune system, the body's natural defence system. The aim is to dampen down the immune system enough to stop it attacking the kidney while still keeping it active enough to fight infections.

Mycophenolate belongs to this group of medicines. It is only available from your doctor. You should **never** stop taking Mycophenolate unless told to by your hospital doctor. If you stop taking Mycophenolate you will lose your kidney.

You should **not** be vaccinated with some vaccines whilst receiving Mycophenolate. For vaccines you can and cannot have, see the vaccination leaflet.

Taking your medicine

- Your recommended daily dose should be divided and is usually taken as equal doses in the morning and evening (12 hours apart).
- Take your tablets or capsules exactly as your doctor asked you, never change the dose yourself. If you accidentally take an extra dose, tell your doctor immediately.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is nearly time for the next dose, then go on as before.
- You will need to have regular blood samples taken and your



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medication may need to be adjusted according to your blood test.

- It is best to take Mycophenolate with a glass of water on an empty stomach, that is, one hour before or two hours after food. If you experience sickness or diarrhoea, the tablets can be taken with food to help reduce the symptoms.

Side-effects

Mycophenolate may cause side-effects in some people. The most common side effects include:

- Diarrhoea
- Trembling
- Dizziness.
- Feeling sick
- Headaches

Other side-effects include problems with the blood. As with any immunosuppressive drug you are more likely to develop infections and any infections may be worse than normal, you should report any signs of infection to your doctor.

Some other drugs may cause problems with Mycophenolate, these include some indigestion remedies, aciclovir, probenecid and cholestyramine. This is not a full list so always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medication along with Mycophenolate.

You are at higher risk of developing skin or cervical cancer. It is best, therefore, to **avoid** sunbathing and to use a sun-block in sunny or bright weather. We also recommend that you see your doctor about regular skin checks and cervical smears for women. If detected early, treatment is more effective.

All tablets may cause side-effects in some people. If you think that you are suffering from a side-effect of one of your tablets it is important **not** to stop taking the tablet, but see your doctor who may be able to change that tablet for one which will suit you better.

It is important that women of child bearing age use two forms of contraception whilst taking mycophenolate and for 6 weeks after finishing treatment as it can cause birth defects during pregnancy and problems with the baby after birth. Men must also make sure they use condoms whilst taking mycophenolate and for 90 days after finishing treatment, as

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mycophenolate can also damage sperm. Female partners of male patients taking mycophenolate should also use contraception whilst their partner is being treated and for 90 days after they complete treatment.

Storing your medicine

Store the capsules or tablets in their original container in a cool, dry place away from children. Only remove the capsules from the blister pack when it is time to take them.

If you have any further queries or concerns, please contact the Renal Unit on 024 7696 7777

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 7777 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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