

## Renal Services

# Mycophenolate (for vasculitis)

Mycophenolate is a medicine that is often used in the treatment of vasculitis. It can also be used for kidney transplantation. It's available under the brand name Cellcept (mycophenolate mofetil), Ceptava (mycophenolate sodium), and several other brands.

### About your medicine

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

Mycophenolate is an immunosuppressant. It is only available from your doctor. You should **never** stop taking mycophenolate unless told to by your hospital doctor.

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

### 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.



## Patient Information

- 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. Your medication may need to be adjusted according to your blood test.
- It's best to take mycophenolate with a glass of water one hour before **or** two hours after food. If you experience sickness or diarrhoea, you can take the tablets with food to help reduce this.
- Do not break/crush the tablet or open the capsule. Swallow them whole.

## Side effects

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

- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sick
- Trembling
- Headaches
- Dizziness

Other side effects include problems with the blood. As with any immunosuppressive medicine, you're 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 medicines may cause problems with mycophenolate. These include some indigestion remedies, acyclovir, probenecid, and cholestyramine. This is not a full list, so always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medication with mycophenolate.

You are at higher risk of developing skin or cervical cancer. It is best to **avoid** sunbathing to use a sunblock in sunny or bright weather. We also recommend 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 you're suffering from a side effect of one of your tablets, it's important **not** to stop taking the tablet. See your doctor who may be able to change that tablet for one which will suit you better.

## Patient Information

### Contraception

Women of childbearing age must use two forms of contraception:

- whilst taking mycophenolate
- for 6 weeks after finishing treatment

Mycophenolate can cause birth defects during pregnancy and problems with the baby after birth.

Men must also make sure they use condoms:

- whilst taking mycophenolate
- for 90 days after finishing treatment

Mycophenolate can also damage sperm.

Female partners of male patients taking mycophenolate should also use contraception whilst their partner is 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:

Renal Unit 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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#### Document History

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