



LUPUS MEDICINES

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS: MYCOPHENOLATE (CELLCEPT)

Questions answered:

What are immunosuppressants?

How does mycophenolate work?

What are the benefits of taking mycophenolate for a person with lupus?

How long does mycophenolate take to work?

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What are immunosuppressants?

- In lupus and other autoimmune diseases, instead of protecting the body from viruses and other invaders, the body's immune system attacks healthy tissue. Immunosuppressant medications decrease the amount that the body fights against healthy tissue.

How does mycophenolate work?

- One way mycophenolate works is by decreasing the production of certain immune cells.

What are the benefits of taking mycophenolate for a person with lupus?

- Mycophenolate has been shown to decrease side effects of lupus and help improve kidney function in lupus patients with kidney problems.
- The drug is steroid-sparing, therefore patients are often able to lower the amount of steroids they are on. This can reduce the side effects that often come along with steroid usage.

How long does mycophenolate take to work?

- The effects of mycophenolate can usually be felt between 6 and 8 weeks after starting.

How do you take mycophenolate?

- Mycophenolate can be taken orally as a pill, liquid, capsule, or tablet. Typically, a patient will take a dosage twice daily, however this may vary.
- It can also be taken as an injection or an infusion.

What do you do if you forget to take your mycophenolate?

- If you miss a dose of mycophenolate and it is not close to the time for the next dose, take it as soon as you remember and then again at the next scheduled time. If it is close to the next dose, take only that dose. Do not take a higher dosage at one time to make up for a missed dose.

What are the side effects of mycophenolate?

- Mycophenolate may cause some side effects such as stomachache, nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea headache, dizziness, sleeplessness, and tremors (involuntary muscle movements) may also occur. Skin rashes can arise but are less common. Since lupus can also cause skin rashes, you should speak with your doctor upon detecting any new rashes or symptoms.

How do you use mycophenolate safely?

- Have regular blood tests.
- Always wear sunscreen when going outside.
- Do not take if you are pregnant, breast-feeding or are planning a pregnancy.
- Talk to your doctor before planning any surgery or vaccination.

When should you call your doctor?

- Temperature greater than 100.5, chills, or night sweats.
- Continued cough, increased sputum, colored sputum, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, chest tightness, wheezing.
- Bruising or bleeding without an obvious reason.
- Started any new medicine.

Be sure to talk to your rheumatologist if you have any other questions or concerns.