

Subcutaneous Methotrexate

What is Methotrexate?

- Also known as a Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug (DMARDs)
- It helps reduce:
 - Joint pain
 - Swelling
 - Stiffness
 - Long-term joint damage

Your Methotrexate prescription:

- Your methotrexate injections are to be taken once weekly
- You will also be prescribed Folic acid 5mg to take every day except the day of methotrexate day
- For example if you took Methotrexate every Monday you would then take Folic acid Tuesday to Sunday
- Please allow 12 weeks for methotrexate to take effect
- Methotrexate injections will be prescribed by the Rheumatology team, not your GP
- Delivery will be arranged through the Homecare company Sciensus
- Sciensus will contact you in approximately 4-5 weeks to organise delivery

Blood monitoring:

- Bloods will be monitored by your GP
- If you are starting Methotrexate you must get blood monitoring once every 2 weeks for 6 weeks, then once monthly for 3 months, then once every 3 months thereafter
- If your methotrexate dose increases then you must go back to every 2 weekly blood monitoring

- It is your responsibility to contact your GP to arrange these bloods
- If there is anything abnormal with your blood results your GP will inform us or may want to recheck them again

Important Safety Information:

Avoid certain antibiotics while on methotrexate:

- Trimethoprim
- Co-Trimoxazole - **These antibiotics can interact dangerously with methotrexate.**

Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

- Women must use contraception while taking methotrexate. If you are planning a pregnancy please contact the Rheumatology department to discuss further.
- You must not take methotrexate if you are pregnant or trying for a baby, as it can harm an unborn baby.
- Methotrexate should be stopped at least 3 months before becoming pregnant.
- If you become pregnant while taking methotrexate, or within 3 months of stopping it, contact your doctor immediately.
- Men can continue methotrexate when trying for a baby - current research shows it is safe.
- If you are planning a pregnancy, you should take folic acid to support your health and your baby's development.
- You should not breastfeed while taking methotrexate, as the drug may pass into breast milk and the effects on a baby are unknown.
- Your doctors will usually recommend restarting methotrexate once breastfeeding has finished, to reduce the risk of an arthritis flare.

Side Effects:

Most people tolerate Methotrexate, but side effects can occur in a small number of patients.

- Side effects that can be common are gastrointestinal side effects such as nausea, diarrhoea, and generally feeling unwell (we would advise to persevere and hopefully as you get use to medication these symptoms will start to lessen however if not please contact us)
- If you notice any persistent sore throat, breathlessness, then please contact our nurse's advice line.

More information:

- **Arthritis UK** – [Methotrexate](#)
- Patient information leaflet included with your medication

Injection Disposal & Safety:

- Sciensus will provide a purple-topped cytotoxic sharps bin for used pens.
- Metoject PEN is a single-use autoinjector taken once weekly.
- Do not attempt to refill the pen.
- Dispose of used pens in the sharps bin.
- Sciensus will collect the bin once full.
- All other waste (e.g., packaging) can go in regular household rubbish.

Instructional Video:

To familiarise yourself with the Metoject PEN, please watch the following video:

[The metoject®PEN \(subcutaneous methotrexate\), how to use it and support materials – Metoject® PEN \(subcutaneous methotrexate\)](#)

Infections/Antibiotics:

Withhold methotrexate if you:

- Have any active infection
- Are taking antibiotics
- Resume methotrexate 2 weeks after you are free from infection and no longer on antibiotics
- We also advise keeping up to date with regular vaccinations such as flu, COVID, pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations

Clean-Up Kit:

- Sciensus will also provide a clean-up kit.
- If medication is accidentally spilled, use the kit and dispose of materials in the cytotoxic sharps bin.

Storage Instructions:

- Keep the pen in its original box, away from sunlight.
- The medication should appear clear to yellow.
- If you see an air bubble in the control window, do not remove it - it will not affect the dose or cause harm.
- Store in a cool, dark cupboard, out of reach of children and pets.
- Refrigeration is not required unless the temperature exceeds 25C.

Travel Advice:

- Always carry your pen in hand luggage to avoid loss and maintain temperature control.
- If cabin temperature exceeds 25C, ask a flight attendant to store the pen in the onboard fridge.
- For travel to warmer climates, consider using a small cooling box for transport from airport to hotel.
- Contact the Rheumatology department before travelling abroad - we can provide a travel letter if needed.