


Information about
Mycophenolate Mofetil

Department of Neurology
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital
1345 Govan Road,
Glasgow
G51 4TF
Telephone: 0141 201 1100



Why am I being prescribed mycophenolate mofetil (brand name Cellcept)?

Mycophenolate is used in the treatment of several different types of conditions, including Myasthenia Gravis. Mycophenolate has effects on the immune system (the body's own defence system). One of its actions is to dampen down the activity of the immune system, so it is always used with care.

When and how do I take mycophenolate?

Mycophenolate is usually taken in capsule or tablet form twice a day (morning and night). Tablets and capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of water or food. Do not crush or chew.

What dose do I take?

Your doctor will advise you. Often your doctor will start you on a lower dose (for example, 500mg twice a day) and will increase to the recommended dose of 1g twice a day if no side effects occur.

How long will Mycophenolate take to work?

Mycophenolate does not work straight away. It may take 3-6 months before you notice any benefit.

What are the possible side-effects or risks?

The common side-effects of mycophenolate are:

- Sickness
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain

Taking mycophenolate can make you more vulnerable to develop infections. If you develop a sore throat or other infections, a fever, unexplained bruising or bleeding, or if you develop any other unexplained new symptoms after starting mycophenolate, you should contact your doctor or nurse.

There is a slightly increased risk of certain types of cancer with mycophenolate. Please discuss this with your doctor. Because of the small increase in risk of skin cancer, you should avoid exposure to strong sunlight and wear protective clothing and sunscreen protection.

If you have not had chickenpox but come into contact with someone who has chickenpox or shingles, or if you develop chickenpox or shingles, you should see your doctor immediately as you may need special treatment.

Do I need any special checks while on mycophenolate?

Yes. Because mycophenolate can affect the blood count and can sometimes cause liver or kidney problems, your doctor will arrange for you to have regular blood checks while you are taking mycophenolate. This is very important. You may be asked to keep a record booklet with your blood test results. Please take this with you when you visit your GP or the hospital. **You must not take mycophenolate unless you are having regular blood checks.**

Can I take other medication along with mycophenolate?

Yes. Many drugs can be safely taken with mycophenolate. However, some drugs interact with mycophenolate, such as antacids, and you should always tell any doctor treating you that you are taking mycophenolate. Do not take over-the-counter preparations or herbal remedies without discussing this first with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Can I have vaccinations while on mycophenolate?

It is recommended that you should not be immunised using any of the "live" vaccines such as polio, rubella (German measles), yellow fever and typhoid.

An "inactivated" polio vaccine can be given instead of the "live" vaccine and the "inactivated" version should also be given to people you are in close contact with, such as

members of your household. If you are on mycophenolate you should avoid contact with children who have been given the “live” polio vaccine, for 4-6 weeks after vaccination.

The yearly flu vaccines are safe and recommended.

Does Mycophenolate affect fertility or pregnancy?

You should not take mycophenolate when pregnant, and you should not become pregnant for at least 6 weeks after stopping mycophenolate. If you are planning a family or if you become pregnant while taking mycophenolate you should discuss this with your doctor as soon as possible. You should not breastfeed while taking mycophenolate.

May I drink alcohol while taking mycophenolate?

Yes. There is no particular reason for you to avoid alcohol while taking mycophenolate but you should drink in moderation.

Where can I obtain more information?

If you would like any further information about mycophenolate, or if you have any concerns about your treatment, you should discuss this with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Remember to keep all medications out of the reach of children.