

## Methotrexate

Methotrexate is an effective treatment for many skin conditions. Including psoriasis, and has been used for over 30 years. It helps reduce the activity of the cells which cause inflammation. Possible side effects may include nausea, loss of appetite, diarrhea, mouth sores, decreased blood counts, liver function abnormalities, headaches, or shortness of breath/dry cough. To help with some of these effects, a vitamin, folic acid, is taken on a daily basis while on Methotrexate. To monitor for toxicity/side effects, it is important to get blood tests performed as instructed.

Important things to remember while on Methotrexate:

- Do not get pregnant – effective birth control is mandatory for women on this medicine
- Do not drink to excess/limit alcohol intake (especially on treatment days)
- Do not receive *live* vaccinations (FluMist, shingles, chickenpox)
- Contact our office or your physician with any fever > 101°F before taking Methotrexate.
- Avoid specific medicines such as Bactrim/Septra, NSAIDs, some antibiotics, etc. When in doubt, have your pharmacist check for interactions or call our office.

Blood tests will be necessary before starting and during treatment. Blood work will be required regularly to monitor the blood count, liver function, and kidney function. Yearly TB (tuberculosis) skin tests are also necessary.

Methotrexate is taken by mouth, one day per week as directed by your doctor. Folic acid is taken every day (2 pills daily)

1. Week 1: Take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets on the first day.  
You will need blood tests done 4-6 days after this first dose.
2. Week 2: Take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets on the designated day.

**Call to confirm labs normal before continuing to 3<sup>rd</sup> week of dosing  
Psoriasis Center (317) 621-7790 x147**

3. Week 3: Take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets on the designated day.  
You will need blood tests done 4-6 days after the third dose.
4. Weeks 4+: Take \_\_\_\_\_ tablets on the designated day.  
You will need blood tests done 4-6 days after the fifth dose.

You will continue to take the prescribed dose (number of tablets) once a week until otherwise instructed by your physician. Blood tests will be scheduled on a regular basis based on the dose of Methotrexate, response to treatment, and previous test results.