

## MYCOPHENOLATE MOFETIL

### **What are the aims of this leaflet?**

The leaflet has been written to help you understand more about mycophenolate mofetil. It will tell you what it is, how it works, how it is used to treat skin conditions, and where you can find more about it.

### **What is mycophenolate mofetil and how does it work?**

Mycophenolate mofetil is a very powerful medicine used to make kidney, heart and liver transplants successful. However, it is also useful in a variety of skin conditions. It reduces the action of the body's own defence system (the immune system) and it is one of the group of drugs known as immunosuppressive agents. It is useful if the immune system loses control and damages your own body.

### **Which skin conditions are treated with mycophenolate mofetil?**

These include severe psoriasis, severe atopic dermatitis, blistering conditions, lupus erythematosus and pyoderma gangrenosum.

### **When should I take mycophenolate mofetil?**

The dose is normally divided into two daily doses, taken in the morning and the evening.

### **What does mycophenolate mofetil should I take?**

Your doctor will advise you here. It is available in 250mg capsules and 500mg tablets. The normal dose lies between 1 and 3 grams daily.

### **What are the possible side effects of mycophenolate mofetil?**

Although mycophenolate mofetil has been used for a number of years, and found to be well tolerated, occasionally it can have adverse effects. It can make you anaemic, prone to infections, or cause excessive bleeding. It can affect the gut – causing nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea and indigestion.

Although this is uncommon, patients on long-term mycophenolate mofetil are more likely than others to develop skin cancers and so should avoid excessive exposure to sunlight.

### **How will I be monitored for the side effects of mycophenolate mofetil treatment?**

Make sure you attend your doctor or nurse for regular blood checks – frequently at first (i.e. weekly) and less often as time goes on – perhaps 1-3 months once you are well under control. Your liver and kidney functions also need to be monitored regularly.

### **Does mycophenolate mofetil affect fertility or pregnancy?**

You must not become pregnant whilst on mycophenolate mofetil, and for at least 6 weeks after stopping the drug. You should not breast feed if you are taking mycophenolate mofetil.

### **Can I take other medicines at the same time as mycophenolate mofetil?**

Mycophenolate mofetil does not mix well with some medications and this may alter the dose of mycophenolate mofetil you may need. Tell your doctor about medicines you are taking (whether on prescription or brought over the counter) prior to starting treatment. Do not begin medicine or change its dosage without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist.

**Medications that can cause problems include:**

Antacids, such as aluminium hydroxide and gaviscon reduce the absorption of mycophenolate mofetil.

Antiepileptic drugs such as phenytoin are less well absorbed when taken with mycophenolate mofetil.

The tranquilliser clozapine increases the risk of a fall in white blood cell count and lowers defence against infection.

Mycophenolate mofetil interacts with some antiviral drugs including acyclovir and ganciclovir.

Lipid-regulating drugs (e.g. cholestyramine) can affect the absorption of mycophenolate mofetil.

**Where can I find out more about mycophenolate mofetil?**

If you want to know more about mycophenolate mofetil, or if you are worried about your treatment, you should speak to your doctor or pharmacist. The information does not list all of the side effects of mycophenolate mofetil. For fuller details, look at the drug information sheet which comes as an insert with your prescription for mycophenolate mofetil.

**(While every effort has been made to ensure the information given in this leaflet is accurate, not every treatment will be suitable or effective for every person. Your own doctor will be able to advise in greater detail)**