

# Mycophenolate for Glomerulonephritis

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## What is mycophenolate (mye koe fen' oh late)?

Mycophenolate mofetil or mycophenolic acid is a type of medication known as an immunosuppressant. This medication works by lowering your body's harmful response to immune system diseases like glomerulonephritis. This medication is used to control your disease.

## How do I take mycophenolate?

- Mycophenolate comes in a capsule or tablet (pill) form.
- **Always leave the capsules in their original container or blister pack.**
- Take the capsules orally (by mouth). Always swallow each capsule whole. **Do not split, crush, open, or chew the capsules.**
- Take this medication 2 times a day, spaced 12 hours apart.
  - › For example, if you take it at 8 a.m., take it again at 8 p.m.

- This medication is usually taken on an empty stomach. Take it 1 hour before eating or 2 hours after eating. Tell your renal team if you often have an upset stomach after taking this medication. Sometimes taking this medication with food will lower this side effect.
- **Do not take calcium supplements or antacids** (like Tums®) at the same time as mycophenolate. Take these medications at least 1 hour apart. This can stop the medication from working its best.

## **What if I miss a dose?**

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember.
- If it is almost time to take your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at the regular time.
- **Do not take a double dose of medication.** This could lead to more side effects.

## How will I know if the medication is working?

- You will have regular blood tests while taking this medication. This is to check how your body responds to mycophenolate.
- The tests will also help your health care team to lower any side effects.

## What are the possible side effects?

- Common side effects of mycophenolate include:
  - › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
  - › Vomiting (throwing up)
  - › Diarrhea (loose, watery poop)
  - › Heartburn (burning pain in your chest)

If you keep having these side effects, talk to your health care team.

- Mycophenolate may lower your white blood cells (cells that fight infection), red blood cells (cells that carry oxygen), or platelets (cells that help your blood clot). Your regular blood tests will check for this. **Tell your health care team if you have bruising or bleeding.**

- Mycophenolate may increase your risk of getting an infection. Wash your hands often and avoid close contact with anyone who may be sick. **If you are not feeling well** (like a bad sore throat or cough, pain when you pee) **and you have a fever** (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) **or chills, tell your health care team right away.**
- Mycophenolate may increase your risk of lymphoma (blood cancer), skin cancer, or other types of cancer. Talk to your primary health care provider about screening tests you may need based on your age and sex.
  - › **Do not** use tanning beds.
  - › Always protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, protective clothing, and a hat.

## **Is mycophenolate safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding?**

- It is important for both males and females to prevent pregnancy while taking mycophenolate by using birth control.
- Mycophenolate can affect a fetus. Mycophenolate is not recommended during pregnancy, or if you are planning to get pregnant.

- Breastfeeding or chestfeeding is **not** recommended while taking mycophenolate.

## **How do I store this medication?**

- Make sure to store mycophenolate in a dry place at room temperature.
- **Do not store mycophenolate in the bathroom.** Store it away from moisture and sunlight.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.

## **What else do I need to know?**

- Mycophenolate may interact with (affect) some medications. It is important to talk with your health care team before starting any new medications, including over-the-counter medications, supplements, and natural products.
- Talk to your health care team about when to take certain vaccines while taking mycophenolate. Ask if there are any vaccines you should get to protect you while taking this medication.

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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