



Methotrexate for Ectopic Pregnancy

You have been given an injection of Methotrexate to treat your ectopic pregnancy.

You will be asked to return to the Emergency Centre on day four and day seven of your treatment for blood tests. If your hCG level (which is monitored by blood tests) has not fallen adequately, you may receive a second injection.

If the hCG level has fallen, you will be asked to have weekly blood tests, that will be monitored by your GP, until the level is back to normal.

Possible side effects when taking Methotrexate

Methotrexate is a medication that is usually well tolerated in the dose you have been given. Some people notice some mild side effects which include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. These symptoms will usually settle in a few days.

Many patients also experience some colicky abdominal (tummy) pain in the first few days after their injection.

Some patients will have pelvic pain four to seven days after their injection. This usually lasts only four to 12 hours.

If the pain is severe, or you feel faint or experience shoulder pain, you should return to the Emergency Centre for assessment.

Rarely, some people experience more serious side effects. You will be monitored for these during your return visits to the Emergency Centre in the week following your injection.

Some women may experience sensitivity to sunlight, temporary hair loss, sore throat or mouth and lung inflammation, but this is uncommon.

Until your hCG levels are back to normal, you should avoid:

- sexual intercourse
- alcohol
- excessive sun exposure.

If you are unsure about anything, ask your doctor.

It is recommended that you use contraception and avoid pregnancy for three months. Your doctor or pharmacist can advise you about the different contraception options available.



If you are breastfeeding, contact the Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Information Service on **(08) 6458 2723**

Methotrexate therapy

Occasionally, you may encounter some problems which may cause discomfort.

1. Mouth ulcers (stomatitis)

- Use a soft toothbrush and rinse your mouth with warm water.
- Don't use mouthwashes containing alcohol.
- Avoid foods that are too hot or cold.

2. Photosensitivity

- Avoid exposure to the sun.
- Wear protective clothing in the summer.
- Use a sun blocking cream or lotion with SPF of 30+ or higher.

3. Nausea

- This may occur occasionally but can be alleviated with medication from your doctor.

4. Infection

- If you have a fever, cough, sore throat or any infection, immediately inform your doctor at KEMH.

Medications to be avoided when taking Methotrexate

- Antibiotics including:
 - » penicillins
 - » ciprofloxacin
 - » trimethoprim
 - » trimethoprim with sulfamethoxazole.
- Products containing folic acid, including multivitamins as they can reduce the effectiveness of treatment with Methotrexate.
- Probenecid.
- Some reflux medicines such as pantoprazole (Somac®), esomeprazole (Nexium®).
- Anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen (Nurofen®) or diclofenac (Voltaren®) as these can increase the risk of side effects from Methotrexate.



If you go to the dentist or another doctor during this time, tell them that you are currently receiving Methotrexate.



Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital

📍 374 Bagot Road, Subiaco WA 6008

☎ (08) 6458 2222

🌐 kemh.health.wa.gov.au

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.