

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF TAKING MEDICATION

AFTER FOOD

It is advisable to take this medication with a meal or immediately after eating.

ANTACIDS (GAVISCON/MICROGEL/MAYOGEL/PROPAN GEL)

Antacids are best taken an hour after meals, and again at bedtime. Antacids may alter the absorption of iron supplements and some anti-biotics. Considered safe in pregnancy. Renal disease patients must take with caution.

ANTIBIOTICS

Take on an empty stomach, unless advised otherwise. The effect of the anti-biotic is increased if taken on an empty stomach - 1 hour before or 3 hours after a meal. Must be taken regularly and complete the entire course.

ANTI-FUNGAL CREAMS

Clean and dry the affected area before application. Apply 2-3 times a day until the infection is clear, usually 1-2 weeks.

ANTI-HISTAMINES (ALLERGEX/TEXA/DESELEX)

May cause drowsiness. The new generation anti-histamines (Texa/Deselex) do not cause any sedation. Avoid alcohol while taking this medicine.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICINES (CATAFLAM/VOLTAREN/COXFLAM)

To avoid gastric upset, take with or after a meal. If you take aspirin regularly, avoid aspirin while taking this medication.

BEFORE FOOD

Take this medication 1 hour before a meal or 3 hours after a meal. The medication must be taken while the stomach is empty.

BETA-BLOCKERS (ATENOLOL/TEN-BLOKA/PUR-BLOKA)

Take regularly and at the same time every day. Avoid sudden withdrawal. If you are asthmatic you cannot take this medication.

CEPHALOSPORINS (ZINNAT/DACEF/ORELOX/PROZEF)

If you are allergic to penicillin DO NOT take this medicine.

COUGH SYRUPS

There are 2 types of syrups; anti-tussives soothe a dry, throat irritating, non-productive cough, and expectorants help for a wet, chesty cough that is usually productive with phlegm. Bronchodilators make breathing easier.

DOXYCYCLINE (CYCLIDOX/DOXYCYL)

Take this medicine with lots of water and at night. If you are under the age of 8 years, do not take this medicine because permanent teeth discolouration will occur. Avoid milk, over exposure to sunlight and antacids.

EAR DROPS

Patient must be lying down with the affected ear upwards. Before using the ear drop, warm to body temperature by rolling between the palms of your hands. After administering the drop, wait in this position for 10 minutes. If needed, plug the ear with cotton wool dosed with the drop.

EYE DROPS

All eye drops must be discarded 30 days after opening. The correct way to administer the eye drop is to make a pouch with the bottom eyelid and place one drop into the pouch. Blink to distribute the drop through-out the eye.

GARGLES

Do not swallow. Gargle with full concentration, do not dilute, unless advised to. Do not rinse the mouth with water 30 minutes after gargling.

GRISEOFULVIN (MICROCIDAL)

Take with milk, or a fatty meal. It is advisable to either crush or chew the tablets. Duration of treatment depends on the type of infection.

MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION

A diet high in fibre, fresh fruit and vegetables, is the most satisfactory prevention and treatment for functional constipation. Drink plenty of water to avoid intestinal obstruction. Only use Senokot/Dulcolax on a short-term basis. For immediate evacuation use an Enema, or suppository.

MANAGEMENT OF DIARRHOEA

If necessary take an anti-diarrhoeal medicine like Imodium/Lomotil. Acute diarrhoea may require urgent fluid and electrolyte replacement e.g. Rehidrat. Associated symptoms like vomiting, stomach pain and cramping must be treated as well. Dietary changes may also be helpful; avoid spicy meals, reduce milk and dairy intake. Consult a doctor if blood and mucus are visible in the stool.

METRONIDAZOLE (FLAGYL)

Avoid alcohol. Severe vomiting, stomach pain and cramping will occur if alcohol is taken with this medicine. Complete the course. A common side effect is a metallic taste.

METOCLOPERAMIDE (MAXOLON)

Take 15-30 minutes before meals. Severe muscle spasms and dystonic reactions may occur occasionally in children and young adults.

NIZORAL (KETAZOL)

Complete the course. Avoid alcohol. Avoid antacids, if necessary take 2 hours after Ketazol. Discontinue immediately if signs or symptoms of hepatitis occur. Please report nausea, fatigue, jaundice, dark urine, or pale stools without delay.

PENICILLINS (AMOXIL, AUGMENTIN)

Women taking oral contraceptives must use additional methods of contraception while taking this medicine. Consider taking a pro-biotic while taking this medicine to avoid super-infections, anti-biotic associated diarrhoea and thrush. Complete the course.

QUINOLONES (CIPROBAY, TAVANIC, AVELON, UTIN)

Causes photosensitivity. Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight. Drink plenty of water. This medicine should be taken on an empty stomach. Avoid antacids. Patients under the age of 18 should not take this medicine.

ROACCUTANE

Do not take this medicine if you are pregnant. Females must be on an oral contraceptive while taking this medicine. Exacerbation of acne may be seen initially. Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight. Do not donate blood, use contact lenses and do excessive exercise while taking this medicine. Limit vitamin A intake, including health foods and vitamin supplements. Excessive drying of the skin, mucous membranes and eyes may occur.

SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION IN INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Sunken fontanelle, crying without tears, dry mouth and tongue, dry nappy for 3 or more hours, fever, irritable or skin does not flatten when pinched and released. Common causes are diarrhoea and vomiting. Treatment is to drink plenty of fluids containing electrolytes, e.g. Rehidrat. Avoid juice, plain water and colas.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF HYPERGLYCAEMIA (HIGH BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS)

Frequent urination, thirst, numbing or tingling feet, frequent infections, blurred vision and tiredness.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF HYPOGLYCAEMIA (LOW BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS)

Palpitations, headache, hunger, nervousness or confusion, sweating, nausea, irritability, trembling and poor concentration.

STEMETIL (MITIL/SCRIPTO-METIC)

Used for nausea, vomiting and vertigo. Take 30 minutes before food. May cause drowsiness and impaired concentration.

VAGINAL CREAMS (CANESTEN, GYNO-DAKTARIN, GYNO-PEVARYL, DALACIN)

Use 1 applicator full at night, or as directed. If pregnant do not use the applicator, apply as a topical cream only. Complete the course, usually for 1 week. Sexual partners should use condoms to avoid cross infection.