

MESALAZINE

(Pentasa, Salofalk, Mesasal, Mezavant)

What is Mesalazine?

Mesalazine is a drug that is used to treat mild to moderate ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. It is a type of drug called 5-aminosalicylic acid (5-ASA).

Mesalazine is often used as a first line medication in inflammatory bowel disease to achieve and maintain disease remission, as well as prevent relapse. It works to control inflammation at the lining of the bowel wall. Your doctor may also want you to take other medications to help manage your disease.

How do I take it?

Mesalazine can be taken orally or rectally. Your gastroenterologist will determine which preparation and dose is most appropriate for you based on the location and severity of your disease.

Oral preparations:

Tablets – used to control inflammation in small and large bowel. Swallow tablets whole with water, 1 – 2 times per day. Do not crush or chew. Tablets may be taken before or with food, depending on the brand. Please check this with your pharmacist.

Granules – used to control inflammation in small and large bowel. Granules can be taken with or without food, 1 – 2 times per day. Do not crush or chew.

Rectal preparations:

Suppositories – used to control inflammation in the rectum and sigmoid colon (lower part of the large bowel). Suppositories are inserted directly into the back passage, 1 – 2 times per day and best taken before bed.

Enemas & foam enemas – used to control inflammation in the lower part of the colon. Enemas are inserted directly into the back passage, once a day and best taken before bed.

When prescribed mesalazine your doctor, IBD nurse or local pharmacist can explain in more detail how the medication should be taken.

What if I forget a dose?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember on the same day. If you only remember the next day, continue as normal and do not double up on the dose.

Can I take other medications?

Mesalazine can be taken with other medicines but it is important you tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking. This includes over-the-counter medicines, patches, eye drops, and herbal or alternative therapies.

Routine monitoring and follow up

When taking mesalazine, you will need a yearly blood test to check kidney function and regular follow up appointments with your gastroenterologist. If you become unwell or your bloods tests are abnormal, you may require more frequent monitoring or have your dose of mesalazine changed.

What are the side effects?

Mesalazine is well tolerated by most people. Common side effects of mesalazine include headache, abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhoea and rash. Rare side effects include hair loss, body aches, kidney dysfunction, raised liver enzymes and inflammation of the pancreas. A severe allergic reaction is very rare side effect of mesalazine.

Pregnancy and Mesalazine

Mesalazine is generally considered safe in pregnancy. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, please inform your doctor so they can discuss treatment options with you.

Who do I contact for help?

You can contact the IBD Helpline on (03) 9288 3592 during business hours. Private patients can contact their gastroenterologist's private rooms directly.

For urgent matters outside of business hours, contact the St Vincent's Hospital Switchboard on (03) 9288 2211. Ask to speak with the gastroenterologist on call. In an emergency you should go to your local Emergency Department or call an ambulance (dial 000).