

METRONIDAZOLE

(Flagyl, Metrogyl, Metronide)

What is Metronidazole?

Metronidazole is an antibiotic that is used to treat bacterial infections. It is often used in patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) who may have an infection in their gut or after surgery. Metronidazole is also used in patients with perianal fissures, fistulas or abscesses. Your doctor may prescribe metronidazole for several months.

How do I take it?

Metronidazole can be taken right before or with a meal, swallowed whole with a glass of water.

What if I forget a dose?

If you forget a dose of metronidazole, take it as soon as you remember. If you are taking the drug more than once a day, take your dose if it is more than 4 hours before your next dose. Otherwise, take the next dose as usual. Do not double up on the dose.

Can I take other medications?

Metronidazole can be taken with other medicines but can interact with some medications such as warfarin. 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. *You should not drink alcohol while taking metronidazole and for 3 days after stopping.*

What are the side effects?

Most people tolerate metronidazole very well. Common side effects of metronidazole include nausea, diarrhoea, headache, abdominal cramping, loss of appetite, a metallic taste in the mouth, furry tongue and vomiting. Less common side effects are constipation, dizziness, skin rash and thrush. Uncommon but important side effects include tingling or numbness in the fingers and toes and inflammation of the pancreas. A severe allergic reaction is a very rare side effect of metronidazole. Drinking alcohol with metronidazole can make nausea, abdominal pain and headache worse.

Pregnancy and Metronidazole

Metronidazole is generally considered safe in pregnancy. If metronidazole is given, breastfeeding should be withheld for 12-24 hours after the dose.

What do I do if I feel unwell?

It is important to report tingling or numbness in the fingers or toes, as well as severe nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea to your gastroenterologist, GP or IBD nurse. You may need to stop taking metronidazole.

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).