

Cellcept (Mycophenolate Mofetil)



What is it?

- Cellcept is a pill that belongs to a group of medications that suppresses (lowers) the body's immune system.

How does it work?

- Cellcept works by lowering the body's immune system that has been turned on too much in fighting an illness. It helps reduce the inflammation (swelling, warmth, pain or stiffness) that develops in conditions such as Lupus (especially with kidney disease), Vasculitis, Autoimmune eye disease, & Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease).

Why am I taking it?

- Cellcept has been ordered by your doctor to help treat your specific health condition. Cellcept may be taken with other medications to help
 - slow or even prevent damage to your joints, eyes & other areas of the body
 - improve the condition of body tissues affected by the illness
 - reduce pain in your joints or other tissues
 - increase your ability to move your body & do daily activities.

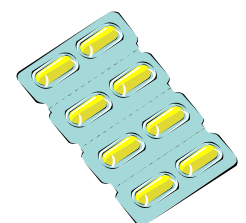
How quickly does it work?



- Most people find their symptoms (swelling, pain or stiffness) start to feel better within 6 – 8 weeks after taking Cellcept.
- If no improvement in your symptoms is seen in 6 – 8 weeks, your doctor may increase the dosage. The amount of medicine you need to take can be from 250 mg to 1000 mg twice a day.

How do I take it?

- Each pill comes in 250 mg or 500 mg.
- Cellcept is taken twice a day, 12 hours apart.
- Cellcept should be taken on an empty stomach.



What if I forget to take it?



If you forget to take a dose of Cellcept, wait until your next dose is due.

What tests are needed?



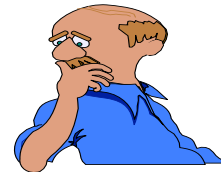
Blood tests:

- Your doctor will order specific blood tests to follow how well your condition is doing.
- Do blood tests every week for the first month of taking Cellcept
- Once your doctor decides on the right amount of Cellcept to control your inflammatory condition the blood tests will be done every 4 – 6 weeks.

What are the possible side effects?

Cellcept is generally well-tolerated. The possible side effects to watch for are:

- upset stomach or nausea
- diarrhea
- acne or rash
- difficulty sleeping
- headaches or dizziness
- tremor



Other more serious side effects may include:

- respiratory infections
- low white blood cell count
- fever
- cough, shortness of breath
- swelling in parts of your body (feet, legs, hands)

What if I have a side effect?



Call your doctor or nurse if you develop any symptoms.

- Although a side effect can occur anytime while taking Cellcept, it usually happens within the first 2 months. Side effects often occur because of how much Cellcept you are taking.
- The Cellcept may need to be reduced or stopped. Also the blood tests may need to be done more often.

Are there any precautions?

Pregnancy

- Do not take cellcept if you are pregnant, contemplating pregnancy or breast feeding.
- Use birth control for 6 weeks after discontinuing Cellcept before attempting to become pregnant.





Bruising

- Call your doctor if you develop any unexplained bruises or bleeding.

Drug Interactions

- It is not yet known how cellcept interacts with many medications.
- Notify your doctor of any medications and supplements you are taking – both prescription and over-the-counter.

Cellcept should not be taken with these medications:

- Acyclovir (Zovirax)
- Cholestyramine (Questran)
- Azathioprine (Imuran)
- Methotrexate
- Bactrim (Trimethoprim/Sulfamethoxazole)
- Dilantin (Phenytoin)

- Many antacids interfere with the absorption of Cellcept. Take antacids (eg: Maalox) 2 hours before or after Cellcept.

Cellcept is safe to take with:

- Birth control pills
- Prednisone
- Cyclosporin
- Anti-inflammatory medications (Ibuprofen, etc.)

Vaccines:

- It is safe to have a flu or pneumovax vaccine
- While taking Cellcept, do not take live vaccines, such as mumps, measles, zostifax(for shingles) & some travel vaccines.



Kidney/Bowel Disease

- Cellcept can impact on chronic kidney and bowel disease. Inform your doctor if you suffer from these conditions.

Direct sunlight

- Stay out of direct sunlight and UV light. Use sunscreen and protective clothing to safeguard your skin.



What if I get sick?



What if I need surgery?

How do I store it?



How often will I see my doctor?



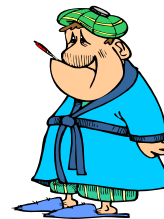
What if I take a trip?



Disclaimer:

Infections

- Call your doctor immediately if you develop any signs of infection such as:
 - fever
 - flu like symptoms
 - urinary frequency, burning
 - chest pain

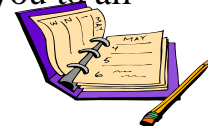


- Cellcept may be held during the week of your surgery by your surgeon.
- Develop a plan with your doctor about your medications & dietary/herbal supplements when having any upcoming surgery, dental work or other procedures.

- Keep capsules at a room temperature of 15 - 30° C (59 - 86° F)
- Leave pills in blister pack until you are ready to use them.
- Cellcept capsules or pills should not be crushed or opened. Avoid breathing in or touching your skin, eyes or mouth when taking. If such contact occurs, wash area thoroughly with soap & water; and rinse eyes with plain water.

1. **See your rheumatologist every 1 to 3 months after starting Cellcept.** These visits allow you & your doctor to decide how well the Cellcept is working to help your condition, and if any changes are needed.

2. **Keep a diary, and a medication list in your wallet.** Record all medications, vitamin/mineral & herbal supplements you are taking & any allergies you may have. Record when you take your medicine, any side effects & any reasons for changes or stopping of medicine. Bring these with you to all appointments with your health care providers.



- Always take extra medicine & a prescription in a purse or bag you are carrying. Bring a travel letter from your doctor.

This information does not replace medical advice. Specific questions about medications should be discussed with your doctor or pharmacist.