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2. Methotrexate

Methotrexate

Generic name: methotrexate (oral) [*meth-oh-TREX-ate*]

Brand names: [Trexall](#), Xatmep Jylamvo

Drug classes: [Antimetabolites](#), [Antipsoriatics](#), [Antirheumatics](#), [Other immunosuppressants](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sophia Entringer, PharmD](#). Last updated on Oct 31, 2024.

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What is methotrexate?

[Methotrexate](#) interferes with the growth of certain cells of the body, especially cells that reproduce quickly, such as cancer cells, bone marrow cells, and skin cells.

Methotrexate is used to treat [leukemia](#) and certain types of cancer of the breast, skin, head and neck, lung, or uterus.

Methotrexate is also used to treat severe [psoriasis](#) and [rheumatoid arthritis](#) in adults. It is also used to treat active polyarticular-course juvenile rheumatoid arthritis in children.

Methotrexate is sometimes given when other medicines have not been effective.

Methotrexate side effects

Common side effects of methotrexate

Common methotrexate side effects may include:

- fever, chills, tiredness, not feeling well;
- low blood cell counts;
- mouth sores;
- nausea, stomach pain;
- abnormal liver function tests;
- [hair loss](#);
- burning skin lesions; or
- being more sensitive to light.

Serious methotrexate side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to methotrexate**: ([hives](#), difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) **or a severe skin reaction** (fever, [sore throat](#), burning in your eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash that spreads and causes blistering and peeling).

Methotrexate can cause serious or fatal side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:

- sudden chest pain, wheezing, dry cough, cough with mucus, chest pain, feeling short of breath;
- fever, chills, swollen lymph glands, night sweats, [weight loss](#);
- blisters or ulcers in your mouth, red or swollen gums, trouble swallowing;
- vomiting, diarrhea, blood in your urine or stools;
- skin changes such as redness, warmth, swelling, or oozing;
- **low blood cell counts** - fever, chills, tiredness, mouth sores, skin sores, easy bruising, unusual bleeding, pale skin, cold hands and feet, feeling light-headed or short of breath;
- **kidney problems** - little or no urination, swelling in your feet or ankles;
- **liver problems** - swelling around your midsection, right-sided upper stomach pain, [nausea](#), loss of appetite, dark urine, [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- **nerve problems** - confusion, weakness, drowsiness, coordination problems, feeling irritable, [headache](#), neck stiffness, vision problems, loss of movement in any part of your body, seizure; or
- **signs of tumor cell breakdown** - tiredness, weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fast or [slow heart rate](#), tingling in your hands and feet or around your mouth.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Methotrexate side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Skyrizi

Skyrizi (risankizumab) is used to treat plaque psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, ulcerative colitis ...

Reviews & ratings

7.9 / 10

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Trodelvy is a targeted anticancer medication used to treat types of breast cancer and bladder ...

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Opdivo

Opdivo is used to treat many cancers, such as melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, malignant ...

Reviews & ratings

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Xeljanz

Xeljanz (tofacitinib) is an oral Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor that may be used alone or with other ...

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Stelara (ustekinumab) is used to treat Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, plaque psoriasis, and ...

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Rinvoq (upadacitinib) is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, atopic ...

Reviews & ratings

7.0 / 10

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Opdivo Qvantig

Opdivo Qvantig is used to treat adults with melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, renal cell ...

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Rybrevant

Rybrevant is used to treat adults with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) that has spread to other ...

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Warnings

Methotrexate may cause injury or death to an unborn baby and should not be used during pregnancy to treat arthritis or psoriasis. Methotrexate is sometimes used to treat cancer during pregnancy. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

Do not use this medicine **to treat psoriasis or rheumatoid arthritis** if you have low blood cell counts, a weak immune system, [alcoholism](#) or chronic liver disease, or if you are breastfeeding.

YOU MAY NOT NEED TO TAKE METHOTREXATE EVERY DAY. Some people have died after incorrectly taking methotrexate every day. **You must use the correct dose for your condition.**

Methotrexate can cause serious or fatal side effects. Tell your doctor if you have [diarrhea](#), mouth sores, cough, shortness of breath, upper stomach pain, dark urine, numbness or tingling, muscle weakness, confusion, seizure, or [skin rash](#) that spreads and causes blistering and peeling.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use methotrexate if you are allergic to it. **You may not be able to take this medicine if you have:**

- alcoholism, [cirrhosis](#), or chronic liver disease;
- low blood cell counts;
- a weak immune system or bone marrow disorder; or
- if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Methotrexate is sometimes used to treat cancer in people who have a condition listed above. Your doctor will decide if this treatment is right for you.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- liver problems, especially fluid in your stomach ([ascites](#));
- kidney disease;
- lung problems, especially fluid in the lungs ([pleural effusion](#));
- radiation treatments; or
- a [stomach ulcer](#) or [ulcerative colitis](#).

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. **Methotrexate may cause injury or death to an unborn baby and should not be used during pregnancy to treat arthritis or psoriasis.** However, methotrexate is sometimes used to treat cancer during pregnancy.

Methotrexate can harm an unborn baby if the mother or the father is using this medicine.

- **If you are a woman**, you may need to have a negative pregnancy test before starting this treatment. Use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy while you are using methotrexate and for at least 6 months after your last dose.
- **If you are a man**, use effective birth control if your sex partner is able to get pregnant. Keep using birth control for at least 3 months after your last dose.
- Tell your doctor right away if a pregnancy occurs while either the mother or the father is using methotrexate.

This medicine may affect fertility (ability to have children) in both men and women. However, it is important to use birth

control to prevent pregnancy because methotrexate may harm the baby if a pregnancy does occur.

Do not breastfeed while using this medicine, and for at least 1 week after your last dose.

Do not give this medicine to a child without the advice of a doctor.

i [Methotrexate pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take methotrexate?

YOU MAY NOT NEED TO TAKE METHOTREXATE EVERY DAY. This medicine is sometimes taken only once per week, or 2 to 4 times per week. Some conditions are treated daily for just a few days followed by a rest period of 1 week or longer before taking the medicine again.

You must use the correct dose. **Some people have died after incorrectly taking methotrexate every day.**

Take methotrexate exactly as it was prescribed for you. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets.

Measure liquid medicine carefully. Use the dosing syringe provided, or use a medicine dose-measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Methotrexate can be toxic to your organs, and may lower your blood cell counts. You will need frequent medical tests, and you may need an occasional liver biopsy or chest X-ray. Your cancer treatments may be delayed based on the results.

If you need to be sedated for dental work, tell your dentist you currently use methotrexate.

Store methotrexate at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

You may store **Xatmep** in a refrigerator or at room temperature. Avoid freezing or high heat. Throw away any unused Xatmep after 60 days if kept at room temperature.

i [Detailed Methotrexate dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Call your doctor for instructions if you miss a dose of methotrexate.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of methotrexate can be fatal.**

Overdose symptoms may include bruising or unusual bleeding, mouth sores, [vomiting](#), little or no urination, bloody or tarry stools, or coughing up blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds.

What to avoid

Avoid drinking alcohol. It may increase your risk of liver damage.

Do not receive a "live" vaccine while using methotrexate, or you could develop a serious infection. Live vaccines include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), rotavirus, typhoid, yellow fever, varicella (chickenpox), zoster ([shingles](#)), and nasal flu ([influenza](#)) vaccine.

Methotrexate could make you sunburn more easily. Avoid sunlight or tanning beds. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

What other drugs will affect methotrexate?

Tell your doctor about all your other medicines, especially:

- an [antibiotic](#) or sulfa drug;
- [folic acid](#);
- [mercaptopurine](#);
- [theophylline](#);
- **NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)** - [aspirin](#), [ibuprofen](#) ([Advil](#), [Motrin](#)), [naproxen](#) ([Aleve](#)), [celecoxib](#), [diclofenac](#), [indomethacin](#), [meloxicam](#), and others;
- **stomach acid reducers** - [esomeprazole](#), [lansoprazole](#), [omeprazole](#), [pantoprazole](#), [Nexium](#), [Prilosec](#), [Protonix](#), and others.

Many drugs can interact with methotrexate. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed here. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Methotrexate drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does methotrexate interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

+

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Popular FAQ

Why should I take folic acid with methotrexate?



How long does it take for methotrexate to work?



Does methotrexate cause weight gain?



How do I know if methotrexate is working for rheumatoid arthritis?



What are the different brands of methotrexate?



More FAQ

- [What causes Plaque Psoriasis?](#)
- [How long does methotrexate stay in your system?](#)
- [How does methotrexate work for ectopic pregnancy?](#)

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Patient resources

- [Methotrexate Injection \(Subcutaneous\) patient information](#)
- [Methotrexate Oral Solution](#)

Other brands

[Otrexup](#), [Trexall](#), [Rasuvo](#), [Xatmep](#), ... +3 more

Professional resources

- [Methotrexate monograph](#)
- [Methotrexate Injection \(FDA\)](#)
- [Methotrexate Sodium \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

Otrexup, Trexall, Rasuvo, Xatmep, ... +3 more

Related treatment guides

- [Rheumatoid Arthritis](#)
- [Psoriatic Arthritis](#)
- [Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia](#)
- [Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia](#)

Further information


Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use methotrexate only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
	Drug history at FDA

User Reviews & Ratings

6.5 / 10

[335 Reviews](#)

Images

[Methotrexate Sodium 2.5 mg \(b 572\)](#)



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