

METHOTREXATE PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

I want you to read this concerning your therapy with methotrexate, a potent medicine which can be very effective in treating psoriasis.

There is usually substantial improvement within 6 to 8 weeks. However, it can cause side effects. Most side effects can be detected before they become a problem, and for that reason I will keep you under close supervision, arranging regular visits and laboratory tests.

HOW TO TAKE METHOTREXATE

Methotrexate is given weekly, rather than daily. This is different from most medications. The importance of this weekly schedule cannot be overestimated. The weekly dose is taken as a single dose. Taking methotrexate more often or changing the dose schedule in any way can result in serious side effects.

Other medications you are taking may result in an increase in side effects or a decrease in the effectiveness of methotrexate. Tell me all the medicines you are taking, whether they are prescription or nonprescription medicines. This is especially true of aspirin, aspirin-like drugs (such as Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil and Naprosyn) and antibiotics.

INFORMATION ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS

The most common side effects of methotrexate are loss of appetite, nausea (but rarely vomiting), diarrhea, abnormal liver test results (the periodic blood tests will check for this), or sores in the mouth. If these or other problems develop, notify me promptly. These side effects are usually temporary.

Methotrexate is known to cause birth defects. Pregnant or nursing women must not take methotrexate.

A side effect of long-term therapy may be the development of scarring (fibrosis or cirrhosis) in the liver. At times it may be necessary to take a small specimen of liver tissue with a needle (liver biopsy) to determine whether scarring is present.

In addition, very rarely in psoriasis patients, methotrexate can cause a lung reaction similar to a pneumonia. The symptoms are usually fever, cough and shortness of breath. Should you develop such symptoms, notify me promptly.

SUMMARY

- 1) Follow your instructions faithfully.
- 2) Take your methotrexate dose on the same day of each week.
- 3) If any side effects develop, notify me before the next dose of methotrexate.
- 4) Do not begin to change any medications with first checking with me.
- 5) Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- 6) Obtain laboratory tests ordered.