



DR. JEFF C.H. DONOVAN
DERMATOLOGIST, SPECIALIZING IN HAIR LOSS

4370 Lorimer Road
Suite 334B
Whistler, BC, Canada
V8E 1A6

Tel: 604.283.1887
Fax: 604.648.9003
Email: office@donovanmedical.com
Web: www.donovanmedical.com

INFORMATION ON FAMOTIDINE

What is Famotidine?

- Famotidine is a medication which belongs to a group of medications called H2 receptor antagonists.
- It is used to treat issues with excessive acid product.
- It is also used to block the effect of histamine in patient with allergy and mast cell related issues

What is the dose of Famotidine?

- The dose is 10 to 20 mg
- The medication is taken by mouth (with or without food) usually one or twice per day.
- Most of our patients start once daily – right before bedtime but in many situations it is used more often throughout the day
- If it is being used to prevent acid issues it is often taken 30-45 minutes before eating or drinking something that is likely to cause acid issues and heartburn
- Alcohol should generally be avoided while using famotidine and Dr Donovan will advise you if this is the case for you.
- The use of famotidine should be limited to a short period. Prolonged use should be evaluated by a board certified allergist.

How is Famotidine used in Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS)?

Your allergist or MCAS specialist will describe how famotidine is to precisely be used in your case. Often famotidine is used together with other medications and strategies, introduced sequentially to get a sense of how you respond to these medications. These include:

- a. H2 Blocker (Famotidine, Ranitidine, Cimetidine, Nizatidine)
- b. Non-sedating H1 blocker (Cetirizine (Zyrtec), Loraditine (Claritin), Fexodenadine (Allegra))
- c. Low histamine diets (avoiding citrus, berries, nuts, chocolate, dairy, tomatoes, vinegar, spinach, left over food)
- d. Sometimes supplements: Quercetin, vitamins C & D, B complex
- e. Low dose naltrexone
- f. Leukotriene inhibitors (Montelukast (Singulair), Zileuton, Zafirlukast)
- g. Mast cell stabilizers (Cromolyn sodium, ketotifen)

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Who should **NOT** use Famotidine?

1. Patients who are allergic to this medication or other similar H2 receptor antagonists
2. Patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
3. Patients with kidney and liver disease require special evaluation
4. Patients with asthma/COPD need special evaluation
5. Patients with heart rhythm issues may require monitoring
6. Some medications interact with famotidine and therefore require caution. This may include medications that affect the QT interval. Dr Donovan will review all medications a patient takes and decide if famotidine is appropriate or not. Some medications that may require careful evaluation with famotidine include:

- Amiodarone
- Apomorphine
- Bupropion
- Ceritinib
- Chloroquine
- Clarithromycin
- Clofazimine
- Donepezil
- Encorafenib
- Erlotinib
- Escitalopram
- Fluconazole
- Fluoxetine
- Fosamprenavir
- Foscarnet
- Fostemsavir
- Gefitinib
- Hydroxychloroquine
- Hydroxyzine
- Ketoconazole
- Levofloxacin
- Lofexidine
- Methadone
- Metronidazole
- Mirtazapine
- Moxifloxacin
- Octreotide
- Ondansetron
- Quetiapine
- Sertraline
- Tacrolimus
- Trazodone
- Vemurafenib
- Vismodegib

Generally speaking, serious Interactions of Famotidine include:

- atazanavir
- bosutinib
- dapsone
- dasatinib
- delavirdine
- digoxin
- indinavir
- itraconazole
- itraconazole
- ketoconazole
- mefloquine
- pazopanib
- pimozone
- ponatinib
- risedronate
- vandetanib

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What are the possible side effects of Famotidine?

Side effects include:

- Headaches, constipation, diarrhea and dizziness are the more common side effects
- More serious side effects are rare and include seizures and a type of pneumonia (called *interstitial pneumonia*) fever, fatigue, heart rhythm issues, liver enzyme elevation, blood count changes, and rashes

What should prompt me to stop Famotidine?

Famotidine may need to be stopped for a variety of reasons. If there are any side effects, be sure to advise Dr. Donovan or your prescribing doctor right away. He will advise if the medication needs to be stopped.

