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INFORMATION ON MYCOPHENOLATE MOFETIL (CELLCEPT, MYFORTIC)

What is mycophenolate mofetil?

- Mycophenolate mofetil is an immunosuppressive medication.
- It is often used for some of the scarring hair loss conditions such as lichen planopilaris and discoid lupus. Rarely it can be used in frontal fibrosing alopecia (FFA).
- It is available also under the trade names Cellcept and Myfortic so Dr. Donovan may occasionally use these names instead.

Who should not take MMF?

Mycophenolate mofetil is not for everyone. Be sure to check with your doctor if MMF is right for you. Not all patients are candidates for MMF. Individuals with the following conditions may or may not be able to use the drug:

1. patients who are pregnant
2. patients who are allergic to the drug
3. patients who are breastfeeding
4. patients with peptic ulcer disease
5. patients with liver or kidney disease
6. patients taking the drug azathioprine (Imuran)
7. patients taking a drug called cholestyramine

What is the typical dose of MMF?

- Check with Dr. Donovan to determine the proper starting dose.
- Patients using Cellcept brand of MMF often start with 500 mg tabs once or twice daily
- Patients using Myfortic brand often start with 360 mg tabs once or twice daily.
- The maximal dose of Cellcept is typically 3000 mg.

What side effects are possible with MMF?

Many patients take MMF without side effects. However, the following is a partial list of side effects. Other side effects may be possible. Dr. Donovan will take them time to review the most common possible side effects.

Side effects include:

1. Gastrointestinal upset - including nausea, vomiting, cramps, bloating
2. Urinary tract symptoms – including urgency to use the washroom, burning and frequent visits to the washroom
3. Infections – a slight increase risk of shingles (viral infection) and possible a slight increase in other viral and bacterial infections. The risks is only increased slightly
4. Neurological problems, including weakness, headaches, ringing in the ears, trouble sleeping
5. Blood level issues including a drop in blood counts

What tests are needed before starting mycophenolate mofetil?

- It is not very common for MMF to affect a patient's blood test results. However, this needs to be closely following for the first month and then periodically afterwards. Complete blood counts ("CBC") and liver testing "LFTS" are the key tests you will have done at the blood lab.
- Urine tests are also done during these times. A full physical examination by the primary care physician is advised yearly while on MMF.

What drugs interact with MMF?

- Be sure to tell Dr. Donovan all the medications you take as some may interact with mycophenolate mofetil.

