

MYCOPHENOLATE MOFETIL (MMF)

What is MMF and how does it work?

MMF (also known as *Cellcept*, *Myfenax* or *Myfortic*) belongs to a group of medications called *immunosuppressants*. These are medications that suppresses (slow down) your immune system (the part of your body that usually fights off germs and sicknesses).

What is it used for?

This medicine dampens down an overactive immune system, and works well for SLE (Lupus), Dermatomyositis, and Scleroderma. MMF is usually taken twice a day, morning and evening. Each tablet is 500mg.

What do I need to know about MMF and pregnancy and breastfeeding?

MMF causes birth defects and miscarriage. Do not take MMF if you are pregnant, if you might become pregnant or if you are not using family planning. If you want to fall pregnant, **please talk to your doctor**. You need to stop MMF and wait at least six weeks before falling pregnant.

It is NOT recommended to breastfeed while taking MMF because small amounts of medication enter the breastmilk and may affect the baby.

Can I take MMF with other medications?

Talk to your doctor before starting any new medications.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are already on any of the following:

- Azathioprine, Acyclovir and ganciclovir (anti-viral medications), Cholestyramine, Rifampicin (one of the medicines used for tuberculosis (TB)), Calcium carbonate (titralac)
- **please take the MMF at least 2 hours before your proton pump inhibitor** (medication for “stomach ulcers” or “heartburn”) – eg Omeprazole “Omez” or lansoprazole “Lanzor”. If you take them together, the tablets interfere with each other and do not work as well

Does MMF have any side effects?

- Like any medication, MMF may cause side effects. But these can be mild and disappear with a few weeks. Please talk to your doctor if any of these side effects bother you or do not go away: **Upset stomach:** Vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps. *Myfortic* may cause less cramps than *Cellcept* so talk to your doctor. **Sick more often:** It is a good idea to keep away from others with coughs and colds. Make sure you get a **flu vaccine** every year and a **pneumonia vaccine** every 5 years.
- **You will need to have blood tests** (after the first month and then every 4 to 6 months)
- **Worrying side-effects:** go to the nearest emergency unit or contact doctors at the lupus clinic urgently if you experience any of these:
 - High fever
 - Unexpected bruising or bleeding
 - Allergic reaction including swelling of the face, lips or tongue and/or difficulty breathing

Contact us:

- Talk to your rheumatologist and rheumatology nurse at your next appointment or phone during clinic times: (021) 404 5394 (Monday or Friday) or (021) 404 5313 (Thursday)