

Treatment Information

How to administer Methotrexate Injections

If there is a problem with any of these DO NOT GIVE! Contact pharmacy with the batch number or the rheumatology helpline.

Where to give the injection

Methotrexate is given by subcutaneous injection, which means the needle will deliver the injection just beneath the skin. The injection can be given in the stomach or the outer aspect of the upper arm or thigh. Generally people find it easier to give their injection in their thigh. You will need to alternate the injection site every week to reduce the risk of inflammation and infection. For example – left thigh, right thigh.

Giving your injection

1. Ensure you have equipment ready

- Clean tray and kitchen towel in case of spillage
- 1 pair of scissors
- Methotrexate injection
- 1 orange needle
- Cotton wool swab
- Sharps bin with cytotoxic label
- Yellow clinical waste bag.

2. Preparation

- **DO NOT RUSH, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME**
- Find a suitable environment to give injection, for example the bedroom or bathroom
- Collect equipment and place on tray
- Wash and dry hands
- Put on gloves
- Check methotrexate labels on plastic sleeve and syringe
- Cut open plastic sleeve containing methotrexate and put on clean tray

3. Administering the injection

- Choose suitable injection site, for example upper outer thigh
- Prepare syringe and try not to touch plunger on syringe to avoid spillage. Remove outer cap from end of syringe and attach orange needle and remove plastic sheath from needle.
- Pinch the skin and insert needle at a 90 degree angle and inject slowly
- Once the methotrexate is administered withdraw the needle and syringe and cover the injection site with a cotton wool swab for a few seconds
- Dispose of syringe, needle, gloves and cotton wool in sharps box. (Do not put the plastic sheath back on the needle or you may prick yourself).

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- Wash hands
 - Record the injection, injection site and batch number in your shared care book.
 - **If you notice any redness or pain at the injection site see your GP or Rheumatology Practitioner so they can assess the area.**
 - If bleeding or bruising occurs at the injection site do not worry as this happens when a small blood vessel is punctured by the needle. The bleeding will soon stop and any bruising will disappear.
4. **Disposal of methotrexate**
- Following safe disposal of the injection equipment close the sharps bin but do not seal the bin. Store in a safe place
 - At your next clinic appointment return the sharps bin for safe disposal, you will be issued with another one. If the yellow clinical waste bag has been used return to the Rheumatology Practitioners promptly for safe disposal
 - Unused methotrexate syringes should be left in the plastic sleeve and returned to the hospital pharmacy.

What to do if a methotrexate spillage occurs

Any spillage must be dealt with immediately. Before handling any spillage ensure you have your gloves on.

Spillage onto work surfaces or floor

Wipe with absorbent paper such as kitchen towel and wash thoroughly with soap and water. Gloves and absorbent paper should be placed in the yellow clinical waste bag for hospital disposal.

Spillage onto clothing

Wearing gloves blot the spillage dry with absorbent paper. Contaminated clothing should be washed separately from other garments as soon as possible. Place the absorbent paper and gloves into the yellow clinical waste bag for hospital disposal.

Spillage into the eyes

Irrigate the eyes with plenty of cool water. Contact your GP if you experience any adverse effects.

Spillage onto the skin

Wash the affected area promptly with soap and water. Contact your GP if you have any skin irritation.

Reference: Royal College of Nursing (2004) Administering Subcutaneous Methotrexate for inflammatory Arthritis.

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How to administer your methotrexate Injection

Information sheet.

General information

The methotrexate solution comes in a pre-filled syringe prepared to the dosage you require. The solution is yellow in colour and clear in consistency. You are quite safe to handle the methotrexate syringe sealed in the outer package, but only you or other trained personnel must be the ones to open the wrapper and give the drug. This ensures that the drug is given safely and reduces the risk of spillages and contact with the skin.

Equipment

You will be provided with pre-filled syringes of methotrexate from the hospital pharmacy on a monthly prescription which you will need to collect. The Rheumatology Practitioner will issue you with latex gloves, needles, a labeled sharps bin for used needles and syringes and a yellow clinical waste bag in case of a methotrexate spillage.

Storage

Keep the methotrexate syringes in the plastic sleeve provided and store in a plastic box with a lid. This box should be labeled CYTOTOXIC DRUG and should be used to transport the injections in when collected from pharmacy.
Store as directed on the package. If unsure ask pharmacy.
If children could have access to the plastic box you must store the syringes in a box that locks.

Before giving your injection check to see:

The solution is yellow and clear and that the syringe is correctly labelled with name, expiry date and prescribed amount.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

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For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

Poole

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Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice