

# Metronidazole

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## What does metronidazole do and why is it needed?

Metronidazole is an antibiotic that is used to treat bacterial infections, including bacterial vaginosis and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

## How is it taken?

Metronidazole is available as a tablet.

## Dosage

Take metronidazole as instructed on patient medication label.

Metronidazole should be taken with or just after food and with plenty of water.

## How long does it take to work?

The medication will start working straight away. However, it is important to take the whole course of medicine that has been prescribed. This is because it takes a while for the antibiotics you have taken to kill the bacteria causing your infection.

## Special precautions

**Important:** Do not drink alcohol while taking metronidazole and for 48 hours after finishing the course because of the possibility of an unpleasant reaction.

Metronidazole may darken urine.

## When can I have sex again after treatment?

If you are taking metronidazole to treat **pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)**, you must not have sex (even with a condom) until you and your partner have completed treatment. This is because it takes a while for metronidazole you have taken to kill the bacteria causing your infection.

It is best to avoid all sexual contact during this time (including oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex and sex with a condom). It is important to wait until your sexual partner has also been treated.

If you are taking metronidazole to **treat bacterial vaginosis (BV)**, it may be advisable to avoid sexual intercourse whilst taking this medication to give the vaginal flora time to return to normal. However, this is not essential. During this time, it is also advisable to discontinue using any soap or perfumed products around the genital area.

## What to do if you miss a dose

Do not take the missed dose. Just take the next dose as usual.

## Other drugs / medicines

Do not drink alcohol while taking metronidazole and for 48 hours after finishing the course.

## Possible side effects

You may experience the following side effects after taking the treatment. However in most cases, these effects are mild and will pass.

- Feeling nauseous (sick) and / or vomiting (being sick).
- Stomach cramps / pains
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Dizziness

Metronidazole can cause drowsiness. Make sure your reaction times are normal before driving, operating machinery or doing jobs that could be dangerous if you were not fully alert.

As long as you do not actually vomit within 3 hours of taking your medication, it should still be effective. Please contact the clinic if you are worried about any side effects you experience.

## What are the risks?

Occasionally allergic-type reactions such as nettle rash or swelling of the mouth and throat could occur. If this occurs, contact your doctor at once. Please contact the clinic if you are worried about any side effects you experience.

## Follow up

If you do have sex during treatment (even with a condom), please contact the clinic on **01392 284960** and speak to a nurse for more information.

## Further information

For more information about azithromycin, please read the information leaflet that comes with your drug or medicine.

For further information about sexual health, please visit our website at [www.devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk)

## References

- Electronic Medicines Compendium <http://www.medicines.org.uk/>
- Electronic BNF <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/>
- BASHH CEG September 2018 – Update on the treatment of Chlamydia trachomatis (CT) infection <https://www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1191/update-on-the-treatment-of-chlamydia-trachomatis-infection-final-16-9-18.pdf>
- BASSH National Guidelines on the management [www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1051/ngu-2015.pdf](http://www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1051/ngu-2015.pdf); [www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1198/mg-2018.pdf](http://www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1198/mg-2018.pdf)

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## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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