

Sulphasalazine EC (Salazopyrin EN)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

What do the tablets look like?

Sulphasalazine tablets are oval, mustard-coloured tablets of 500mg each.

Why are you taking Sulphasalazine?

Sulphasalazine is used in the treatment of arthritis. It is thought to slow the disease. It may help to relieve inflammation and stiffness, and prevent any further damage to your joints.

How to take Sulphasalazine

Your treatment will be increased in stages as follows:

Week	am	pm
Week 1	500mg	
Week 2	500mg	500mg
Week 3	500mg	2 x 500mg
Week 4	2 x 500mg	2 x 500mg

Your GP may decide to increase the dose further to three tablets twice daily, until you reach the right dose for you.

The tablets may be taken morning and evening, preferably with food to avoid side effects. Swallow the tablets whole, do not chew or crunch them.

It may take up to three months before you start to feel the benefit of this treatment.

Sulphasalazine is not a painkiller so you will probably be asked to continue taking your normal medication.

What to do if you miss a dose

If you forget to take your medication, **do not** double your next dose but make a note of it and remember to tell your GP at your next appointment.

Can you take other medicines and drink alcohol?

Always tell your GP that you are taking sulphasalazine before you are prescribed any other medicines.

If you buy medicines over the counter at the pharmacy, also tell the pharmacist you are taking sulphasalazine.

You can drink alcohol in moderation.

Contraception and pregnancy

Although sulphasalazine has been used safely during pregnancy, all drugs can potentially affect the unborn child. Men and women of childbearing potential are advised therefore to use a reliable method of contraception during and for three months after treatment. When planning a pregnancy, it is important that both men and women on this drug discuss medication with the rheumatology team. This should be at least six months before conception.

Blood monitoring

Your GP will arrange for you to have blood tests after starting treatment. This will be fortnightly for the first 6 weeks, monthly for 3 months and then 3 monthly thereafter. These are blood monitoring guidelines from the British Society of Rheumatology but your GP may feel that your bloods need monitoring more frequently.

Special precautions

Having an autoimmune condition can reduce your body's resistance to infection.

You should avoid close contact with people who have infections such as chickenpox. If you know you have been in close contact with somebody with chickenpox, contact your GP for advice.

Do not have any live vaccinations without first discussing it with your GP.

You are advised to keep up to date with an annual flu vaccine and a ten-yearly pneumovax. These can be arranged at your health centre.

All infections should be treated promptly. If you are aware of an infection, arrange to see your GP.

Possible side-effects

- Dark yellow or orange-coloured urine. This is nothing to worry about.
- Soft contact lenses will be damaged by the sulphasalazine.
- Feeling sick (nauseated).
- Loss of appetite.
- Mild headaches.

You should contact your GP or practice nurse if you experience:

- Raised temperature;
- rash;
- sore mouth/mouth ulcers;
- bruising;

If side-effects occur, tell your GP. You may be advised to reduce the dose of sulphasalazine.

Further information

If you need more information, or have any problems or have any queries about your medication, please contact your GP or ring:

Rheumatology Advice Line: 01271 322359

This leaflet is intended for use by Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Northern services) staff for procedures undertaken at its hospitals. The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if this leaflet is used by those other than our staff undertaking procedures at its hospitals.

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 ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

© Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
This leaflet was designed by the Communications Department.
Email: ndht.contactus@nhs.net