

COLCHICINE THERAPY

Patient information sheet

Your prescription is for

Colchicine at:

mg / day for

months

How does Colchicine work?

Colchicine is a drug that damps down inflammation in joints and tissues where uric acid crystals have become lodged. Colchicine is used in 2 situations:

1. treatment of acute gout attacks
2. prevention of acute gout attacks during the first year of Allopurinol treatment

What dose of Colchicine should I take?

- Treatment of acute gout attacks: 0.5mg 2-4 times a day for 1-2 weeks
- Prevention of acute gout attacks during the first year of allopurinol treatment 0.5mg twice a day for 6-12 months.

What are possible side effects of Colchicine?

Colchicine can cause nausea and loose bowel motions. If diarrhoea is severe and dehydrating Colchicine must be stopped. Rarely colchicine has been known to cause immune suppression and liver irritation. This is more likely to occur in patients with kidney failure. Patients with severe kidney failure should avoid colchicine, or be given very low doses of this drug under close supervision. Liver irritation was also more common in those with kidney failure.

Should I have blood tests done when I am taking Colchicine?

You should have a blood count (FBC) and liver function tests (LFT's) done every 3 months for the first year. You should also have uric acid levels done to check that you are reaching your target uric acid level of <0.3mmol/l.

What fluids should I drink?

You should drink 2-4 litres of water or diluting juice each day. This helps to flush out uric acid in the urine.

Beer, stout, port and fortified wines should be avoided. Alcohol intake should be restricted to less than 21 units for men and 14 units for women a week. (1 unit = pub measure of spirits or small glass of wine). You should have a minimum of 3 alcohol free days each week.

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The British Society for Rheumatology have produced new guidelines for the management of gout that can be found at www.rheumatology.org.uk