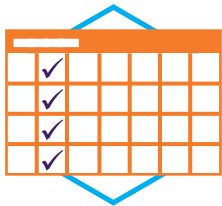


# SAFE USE OF LOW-DOSE METHOTREXATE

Methotrexate is a medicine used to treat many health problems. At low doses, it helps manage some types of arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriasis. A low dose of methotrexate is between 5 mg and 30 mg taken once each week. It is also used for cancer treatment (chemotherapy) but usually at much higher doses. Taking low-dose methotrexate for arthritis or other inflammatory diseases is NOT chemotherapy.

## ✓ When you're taking low-dose methotrexate



Take only **ONCE** each week on the **SAME** day



It is safe to be close to others, including people who are pregnant



You can safely handle low-dose methotrexate tablets or injections without gloves or a mask



You can share bathrooms and toilets without needing special cleaning



Take any unused medicine back to the pharmacy



People who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant should not take or handle methotrexate.

Talk to your doctor for more information.

# What about low-dose methotrexate in hospital?

Sometimes hospital staff take extra precautions when handling methotrexate. These include wearing gloves, masks or other protective equipment when:

- ▶ dispensing and giving methotrexate or
- ▶ handling body fluids (eg, double flushing the toilet).

These precautions are designed for cancer treatment and not low-dose methotrexate. Staff may take extra precautions because they may handle it many times in a day. When you're taking low-dose methotrexate at home, you do not need to follow these steps.

While you are in hospital, you may have a different number of tablets than you usually take at home. This is because the hospital keeps different strengths of methotrexate and may not break tablets. Check with the hospital staff if you are concerned about the medicines you are being given.



## Where can I get more information?

- ▶ Ask your specialist
- ▶ Ask your pharmacist
- ▶ Arthritis Australia ([arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://arthritisaustralia.com.au), [MyRA](#), [MyPsA](#))
- ▶ Australian Rheumatology Association's patient information ([rheumatology.org.au](http://rheumatology.org.au))
- ▶ [Methotrexate](#)
- ▶ NPS MedicineWise ([nps.org.au](http://nps.org.au))
- ▶ [Low-dose methotrexate action plan](#)
- ▶ Download the MedicineWise app to keep track of your medicines and access health information such as blood test results ([medicinewiseapp.com.au](http://medicinewiseapp.com.au))
- ▶ NPS Medicines Line: **1300 633 424**



This material has been adapted from the Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups. Position Statement on the use of low-dose methotrexate. CATAG, 2020.

### **+TARGETED THERAPIES ALLIANCE**

Helping consumers and health professionals make safe and wise therapeutic decisions about biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) and other specialised medicines. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care through the Value in Prescribing bDMARDs Program Grant.

