

METHOTREXATE

(Amethopterin, Rheumatrex, Trexall, MTX)

Type of Drug: Antimetabolite

How is it Given?

- Oral (by mouth)
- Intravenous (IV) – into a vein or central line
- Intramuscular (IM) – in the muscle
- Intrathecal (given through the spinal canal)

How Does it Work?

- Stops cells from making and repairing DNA so the cancer cells cannot grow and multiply

Common Side Effects:

- Mouth sores
- Nausea/Vomiting (more common at high doses)
- Diarrhea (more common at high doses)
- Low white blood cell count (more common at high doses)
- Skin sensitivity to sunlight (rash)
- Skin changes (darkening of the skin, itchy rash)
- Loss of appetite
- Abnormal liver function tests (more common at high doses)
- Gritty eyes (inflammation of the cornea)

Less Common Side Effects:

- Headache, drowsiness
- Blurred vision, eye sensitivity to sunlight
- Hair loss
- Kidney damage
- Skin rash or redness in the areas which received radiation therapy
- Changes to the lungs (cough, shortness of breath)

Note:

- You will be given a drug called Leukovorin which must be taken **exactly on time**.
- Use sunscreen, sunglasses and protective clothing when outdoors.
- Report any mouth sores.
- Always check with your nurse or oncologist before taking any over the counter or prescription medications.