

Can I start a family or breastfeed?

- Colchicine is not often used by women who may wish to get pregnant. The effects of colchicine during pregnancy have not been well studied, so it is not clear if colchicine causes birth defects.
- If you are pregnant or planning to have a child, discuss it with your doctor before you begin the treatment.

How should I store the medicine?

- Keep the tablets away from heat, moist and direct sunlight.
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

In Summary

What you need to know about colchicine?

- Colchicine is usually taken once or twice daily for prevention of gout attack.
- Long-term use of colchicine is not normally required, although the doctor will advise you on this.
- Stop the medicine if you experience nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea during the treatment for an acute attack.
- Colchicine can interact with other medicines. Tell your doctor or pharmacist about all medicines you are taking or plan to take.
- For patients who intend to start a family, consult your doctor before you start the treatment.
- If you have any questions about the treatment, please discuss it with your doctor/advanced practice nurse at 65762418 or Pharmacist at 63265077.

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Colchicine



About your medicine

- Colchicine is a medicine used to treat attacks of gout, a type of arthritis caused by a buildup of urate crystals in the joints.
- It is also used to prevent flare-ups of gout when treatment is started with other drugs such as allopurinol or probenecid.

How is the medicine given?

- Colchicine usually comes in 500mcg tablets in SGH.
- It is taken orally with or after food to reduce stomach upset.
- For prevention of gout attacks, the usual dose is one tablet once or twice a day.
- When used for prevention, colchicine may be used with other gout medicines (e.g. allopurinol, probenecid), or it may be used with reducing doses of corticosteroids.
- Long-term use of colchicine is not required and should be stopped when there are no gout attacks for a few months, as decided by your doctor.
- When used to treat an acute attack, the dose of colchicine is higher than that used for preventing attacks. Do follow instructions given by your doctor. High-dose colchicine should therefore only be taken for a short period of time.

How long does it take for the medicine to be effective?

- Colchicine can be taken during a sudden gout attack and often works quickly.
- Pain relief usually begins within 12 hours, and symptoms often disappear within 24 hours.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

- If you have missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember
- If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular dosing schedule.
- Do not double the dose to make up for the missed dose.

Do I skip dose if I am sick?

- Seek prompt advice from your doctor when you develop any of the serious symptoms of infection described above.
- Your doctor will decide whether to stop colchicine on a case-by-case basis.

What are the possible side effects of the medicine?

- Many people will experience mild side effects from colchicine. Tell your doctor if you experience any side effects.
- Dose reduction may help to minimise the symptoms of side effects. Your doctor will advise on dosage change if necessary.
- Most common possible side effects:
 - Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and diarrhoea. These may be reduced if colchicine is taken with food. If you experience either of these symptoms during treatment for an acute attack, you should stop taking the medicine.
 - Loss of appetite
 - Patients older than 65 may be at increased risk of stomach and intestinal bleeding
- Less common or rare possible side effects:
 - Rash, fever or hair loss
 - Severe diarrhoea with bloody or tarry stools
 - Difficulty in passing urine or blood in urine
 - Confusion or fit
 - Bleeding, mouth ulcers or infection associated with low blood cell counts
- Long-term possible side effects:
 - Muscle inflammation may occur and is more common in people with reduced kidney or liver function taking long term colchicine

When do I seek immediate medical attention?

- See your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:
 - Rash, fever or hair loss
 - Severe diarrhoea with bloody or tarry stools
 - Difficulty in passing urine or blood in urine
 - Confusion or fit
 - Bleeding, mouth ulcers or infection

What should I do when I am taking the medicine?

- Monitoring blood tests is not usually required for people taking colchicine. However, this may be required in patients on long-term colchicine

Can I take other medicines or supplements?

- Colchicine can interact with other medicines. You should tell your doctor or pharmacist about all medicines you are taking or plan to take. This includes over the counter herbal medicines. You should also mention your treatment when you see other healthcare professionals.
- Colchicine can usually be taken safely with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), as long as your kidney function is reasonably normal.
- Over the counter pain relievers (e.g. paracetamol), can be used while taking colchicine provided you take them as directed.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

- Alcohol can trigger an attack of gout so it is advisable to keep alcohol intake to a minimum. In some cases total abstinence from alcohol is recommended. Check with your doctor about your situation.
- Certain foods can trigger an attack of gout. Check with your dietician for more information.