

## DAPSONE

**Other NAMES:** Avlosulfon®

### WHY is this drug prescribed?

Dapsone is used for the prevention and treatment of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP) and toxoplasmosis *gondii* infections.

Dapsone is used when a person has experienced adverse effects or toxicity to the drug of choice for PCP, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP/SMX, Bactrim®, Septra® and others). Dapsone is a safe and effective alternative.

### HOW should this drug be taken?

For the prevention of PCP, dapsone is taken on its own or in a variety of combinations with other drugs such as trimethoprim (Proloprim®), pyrimethamine (Daraprim®) and folic acid (Leucovorin®). The usual dosage of dapsone is 100mg daily. However, the dosage of dapsone may vary when used in combination with other drugs.

For the treatment of PCP infection, dapsone, 100mg daily, is taken in combination with trimethoprim (Proloprim®) (15mg/kg/day in 3 to 4 divided doses) for 21 days.

For the treatment of toxoplasmosis *gondii* infections, dapsone 50 mg or 100 mg daily is given with pyrimethamine (Daraprim®) and folic acid (Leucovorin®).

Your dosage is:

25 mg tablet  
100 mg tablet

\_\_\_tablet(s)(\_\_\_ mg)\_\_\_times a day

Dapsone may be taken with or without food. However, if you have an upset stomach or nausea, it is preferable to take it with food.

Dapsone should not be taken at the same time as didanosine (Videx™), anti-ulcer drugs [ranitidine (Zantac®), famotidine (Pepcid®), pantoprazole (Pantoloc™), lansoprazole (Prevacid®), omeprazole (Losec®), rabeprazole (Pariet®), esomeprazole (Nexium™)] or antacids (Maalox®, Tums®, etc ) as they can decrease dapsone's absorption. If you need to take these drugs, take them at least 2 hours after the dapsone dose.

### What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of dapsone, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the

dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

### What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

Dapsone can cause a variety of rare adverse effects to your blood. The most serious of these are **hemolytic anemia** (the breakdown of red blood cells) and **methemoglobinemia** (an increase in the form of hemoglobin that cannot carry oxygen). **Leukopenia** (a decrease in white blood cells that makes you more at risk of having bacterial infections) may also occur. These effects are related to the amount of dapsone taken and to persons who may already be experiencing low red blood cell levels. Regular laboratory tests are important. If you experience symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, fever and chills, please contact your doctor.

Dapsone is, however, generally well tolerated. Other adverse effects can include **rash, skin itchiness, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, muscle weakness and a tingling or numbness feeling in the hands and toes**. If you develop a skin rash with or without a fever, please consult your doctor or pharmacist.

**It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for**

**your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.**

**What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?**

Dapsone has been used in pregnant women without evidence of any deformities or harmful effects on the fetus. However, as with all drugs, its benefits must be weighed against its potential risks. Breastfeeding is NOT recommended if you are taking dapsone as adverse effects such as hemolytic anemia may appear in the baby. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, please discuss this with your doctor.

Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of dapsone. Also, dapsone might influence the effect of other drugs you are taking. Inform your doctor and pharmacist of all prescribed and non-prescribed drugs you are taking. As well, you should inform them of natural products you are taking. If you wish to start a new drug or natural product, please consult with your pharmacist before doing so.

In particular, you should notify your pharmacist or doctor if you are taking the following drugs:

- probenecid (Benuryl™)
- Rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
- Rifampin (e.g. Rifadin®, Rimactane®, Rofact™)
- warfarin (Coumadin®)

**How should this drug be STORED?**

Dapsone tablets should be stored in a cool (15-30°C) dry place, protected from light. Ensure that the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date ("EXP") shown on the outside of the package. Keep all drugs well out of the reach of children.

Do not store in your bathroom. Heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

**If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.**

**Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.**

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

**Pharmacist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: Product Monograph Dapsone® (dapsone). Princeton, NJ, USA: Jacobus Pharmaceutical Co., Inc., 1997. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003. Reviewed 2009.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be found at: [www.hivclinic.ca](http://www.hivclinic.ca)

***DAPSONE***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***