

FOLINIC ACID

Other NAMES: Leucovorin®

WHY is this drug prescribed ?

Folinic acid is a B vitamin that is used to decrease the harmful effects of different drugs, such as pyrimethamine (Daraprim®) or trimetrexate (Neutrexin®). It is also used to treat certain types of anemias and cancers.

HOW should this drug be taken?

Folinic acid comes as a 5 mg tablet that can be taken with or without food. It is also available as an injection for intravenous (through your veins) or intramuscular (through a muscle in an arm or buttock) administration.

When given to prevent adverse effects caused by pyrimethamine (Daraprim®), the usual dose is 10 to 25 mg once daily. The folinic acid dose can be increased when given for other reasons.

Your dosage is:

5 mg tablet

___ tablets (___ mg) ___ times a day

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of folinic acid, 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?

Some people may experience an **allergic reaction**. If you have any of the following symptoms soon after taking folinic acid, STOP taking the drug and call your doctor IMMEDIATELY: sudden problems breathing, chest pain or tightening, swelling of eyelids, face, tongue or lips, skin rash or “hives” anywhere on the body, skin itchiness, and fever.

When folinic acid is given with 5-fluorouracil (5-FU), an anti-cancer drug, an increase in the 5-FU adverse effects may appear. These adverse effects include **nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomatitis** (red, painful, swollen mouth or throat with small ulcers or sores), or **leukopenia** (a decrease in the number of white blood cells). Your blood will be checked on a regular basis. **Folinic acid does not cause these adverse effects if you are not receiving 5-FU.**

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?

Folinic acid can interfere with certain drugs, for example phenytoin (Dilantin™), phenobarbital and primidone (Mysoline®). 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.

The safety of folinic acid in pregnant women or during breastfeeding has not yet been established. Discuss this with your doctor if this is a concern.

How should this drug be STORED?

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

Do not store in your bathroom or kitchen, as 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 Lederle Leucovorin® Calcium (citrovorum factor (calcium salt of folinic acid). Montreal, Qc, Canada: Wyeth Canada Inc., 2008. 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

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MEDICATION

FACT SHEET