

SULFADIAZINE

Inform your health care team if you have ever had a reaction to a sulfa drug (TMP/SMX, Septra®, Bactrim®, dapsone).

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Sulfadiazine is an antibiotic that is a member of the sulfonamides or sulfa drugs. Sulfadiazine is used to treat a variety of infections, including Toxoplasmosis, an infection of the brain. It can also be used to prevent certain types of meningococcal disease (i.e., meningitis) when the organism is known to be sensitive to sulfonamides.

HOW should this drug be taken?

Sulfadiazine is available as 500 mg round white tablets.

This drug is usually used in combination with pyrimethamine (Daraprim®) in the treatment of **toxoplasmosis**. The suggested dose of sulfadiazine is 1000 to 2000 mg 4 times daily for 6 weeks. The dose can then be decreased to 500 mg to 1000 mg 4 times daily.

Your dosage is:

500 mg tablets

___ tablets (___mg) ___ times a day

Take sulfadiazine with plenty of water, including several additional glasses of

water throughout the day. Sulfadiazine can be taken with or without food.

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of sulfadiazine, 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?

An allergic reaction characterized by a **fever with or without chills, a skin rash, itching, hives, and swelling of the face, lips and throat** is common and can take up to 10 days to appear. If this occurs, call your doctor immediately. If you cannot tolerate sulfadiazine, other drugs can be used to treat toxoplasmosis. Alternatively, your doctor may decide to retry sulfadiazine but by increasing the dose very slowly (desensitization).

Decreases in white blood cells (needed to help fight infection), **red blood cells** (needed to help carry oxygen around your body), **and platelets** (needed to help your blood clot) can also occur. Usually, they do not decrease enough to stop your therapy. It is important to keep your appointments for regular blood work so that any changes can be monitored.

Please inform your doctor if you develop symptoms such as fever, chills, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, fatigue, bleeding or bruising.

Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or diarrhea uncommonly occur. If these effects do happen, take the drug with food. If they remain bothersome, call your doctor or pharmacist.

Sulfadiazine may cause **increases in liver enzymes**. This will be monitored when you come for your laboratory tests.

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?

Before starting sulfadiazine, please inform your doctor if you are allergic to this drug or other sulfa drugs, if you have kidney or liver disease, asthma, blood disorders or a deficiency in the enzyme glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase.

Sulfadiazine can make your skin more sensitive to the sun or sunlamps. Therefore, wear protective clothing and use a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15 whenever you are exposed to the sun. You should avoid exposing yourself to sunlamps.

Ask your pharmacist to help you select a sunscreen that protects against drug sun reactions.

Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of sulfadiazine. Also, sulfadiazine 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.

Sulfadiazine should not be used during the last 3 months of pregnancy. Also, breastfeeding is NOT recommended while you are taking sulfadiazine. Please inform your doctor if you are pregnant.

How should this drug be STORED?

Sulfadiazine 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 where there is heat and moisture (for example, in the bathroom or near the stove) as the drug may become 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: Drugdex drug evaluations Sulfadiazine. Thompson Micromedex® Health Care Services, Vol 115, 2003. 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