

# TRIMETHOPRIM

**Other NAMES:** Proloprim®

## **WHY is this drug prescribed?**

Trimethoprim is an antibiotic used in combination with dapsone (Avlosulfon®) to treat *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP). It is also used to treat various types of bacterial infections.

## **HOW should this drug be taken?**

Trimethoprim is available as 100 mg and 200 mg tablets.

The usual dose of trimethoprim for the treatment of PCP depends on your weight. The dose may also need to be adjusted if you have kidney problems. The dose is usually given 3 or 4 times a day.

Trimethoprim can be taken with food or on an empty stomach. If it upsets your stomach, take it with food.

Your dosage is:

100 mg tablet  
200 mg tablet

\_\_\_ tablet(\_\_\_mg) \_\_\_ times a day

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

If you miss a dose of trimethoprim, 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.

## **Why should you not forget to take this drug?**

If you miss doses of trimethoprim, your infection may continue or worsen. In such a situation, you may need to take other drugs. Therefore, it is extremely important that you take trimethoprim for the entire duration of the treatment.

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

Trimethoprim may cause a **skin rash, itchiness,** and an **increased sensitivity of the skin to the sun.** Consult a doctor immediately if you develop a rash.

**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, and abdominal cramps** are not common. If these effects do happen, take the drug with food. If they remain bothersome, call your doctor or pharmacist. **Stomatitis** (inflammation and sores in the mouth), **headache, joint pain, fatigue** and **muscle weakness** may also occur.

Trimethoprim may cause **increases in liver enzymes, bilirubin and potassium levels.** 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 trimethoprim, notify your doctor and pharmacist if you have ever had an allergic reaction to trimethoprim or co-trimoxazole (Septra®, Bactrim®). Also, inform your doctor if you have kidney or liver problems.

Trimethoprim 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 also avoid sunlamps. Ask your pharmacist to help select a

sunscreen that protects against drug-sun reactions.

Trimethoprim may interfere with many drugs. 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, please notify your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking the following drugs:

- Methotrexate
- Phenytoin (Dilantin™)
- Procainamide (Pronestyl®)
- Pyrimethamine (Daraprim®)
- Zidovudine (Retrovir®)

Trimethoprim should NOT be given if you are pregnant. Also, breastfeeding should be avoided while you are taking trimethoprim. In general, breastfeeding is NOT recommended if you have HIV as you can transmit the virus to your baby through your breast milk.

#### **How should this drug be STORED?**

Trimethoprim 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 Proloprim® (trimethoprim). Saint-Laurent, Qc, Canada: GlaxoSmithKline, 2002. 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)

# ***TRIMETHOPRIM***

## ***MEDICATION***

## ***FACT SHEET***