



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Methotrexate and your child

What is Methotrexate (meth oh TREX ate) ?

- Chemotherapy given to treat different types of cancer.
- It is given intravenous, or “IV”, meaning it is given through the vein.
- It is clear yellow medicine.
- It is given over 4 or 24 hours, depending on your child’s treatment.

When my child arrives at the hospital, what can I expect?

- The nursing staff will obtain your child’s height, weight, vital signs, and labs.
- If your child has:
 - Infusaport, or “port”, please apply Elamax to the skin over the port to help numb the skin thirty minutes before access. The port will be accessed in the treatment room. Labs will be drawn through the port.
 - Hickman, the labs will be drawn through the Hickman.
- Checking your child’s lab values ensures your child can begin Methotrexate.

Will my child need IV fluid?

- The nurse will begin “special” IV fluid through your child’s central line.
- Methotrexate can have harmful effects on the kidneys.
- Giving your child IV fluids, mixed with medicine to make the urine less acidic, helps prevent harm to the kidneys.
- Urine that is less acidic means the urine has a high pH. A high pH is a pH of greater than or equal to 7.
- Before the Methotrexate is started, the urine will be tested to make sure it is safe to give the Methotrexate.
- If the urine pH becomes less than 7, or acidic, a medicine called Sodium Bicarbonate will be given to make the pH high.
- IV fluids may be added to keep the urine dilute.

Can my child still play while attached to a pump?

- Your child can move, play and be active with a pump.
- Your child must be careful with the central line, and “taping and pinning” helps.
- Please ask your nurse to show you how to “tape and pin”.

What if my child needs a spinal tap with Methotrexate?

- Methotrexate is given into the spinal fluid to treat or prevent Central Nervous System disease (cancer cells in the spinal fluid).
- Your child will be given “sleepy” medicine through the IV in the treatment room, or in the Center for Children’s Surgery recovery room (3rd floor of the hospital).
- If your child needs this procedure, they can not have anything to eat or drink for _____ hours before. No gum or candy.
- Your child will need to lay flat for 30 minutes after the spinal tap to help prevent a headache.

What can I expect after the Methotrexate?

- Methotrexate blood levels will be drawn through the central line based on your child’s treatment. These times may be when the medicine ends, 24 hours after starting or ending therapy, and then, every 12 to 24 hours.
- Blood levels check the rate that Methotrexate is being cleared out of your child’s body. The levels inform the staff when the IV fluid and rescue medicine can be stopped because the Methotrexate is safely cleared out of the body. We will also monitor your child’s kidneys.
- Your child’s Methotrexate blood level needs to be less than _____ to be discharged from the hospital, depending on your child’s treatment.
- Leucovorin is a medicine that rescues, or prevents, Methotrexate from harming normal cells. It can be given IV or by mouth. Leucovorin must be given on time. Your child’s Leucovorin will start at _____.

What are the common side effects?

- Nausea and vomiting are common....Zofran and Benadryl are given to help.
- Rash...Please inform your nurse.
- Sensitive to the sunlight...Please have your child wear sunscreen.
- Mouth sores...This can happen 2to 5 days after treatment. Routine Peridex mouth rinse helps lower the risk of mouth sores. Please check with your nurse.

Other:

- Please save all urine for the nursing staff to check.
- Please place a cotton ball in every diaper to allow the staff to check the urine.
- Please wear gloves when handling urine to protect your family.
- Please follow a no-added vitamin C diet. Vitamin C rich foods include orange juice and citrus fruits. With any questions, please ask for help.
- Avoid medicine that delays Methotrexate from being safely cleared. Do not give Bactrim on the day of admission, or during Methotrexate. Do not give Bactrim until Methotrexate is safely cleared.
- Encourage your child to drink fluids.
- Tell the nurse of any questions or concerns.