

What is Calcium Folate?

Calcium folinate is a medication used to reduce the toxic side effects caused by high doses of methotrexate. Calcium folinate is also referred to as leucovorin calcium or folinic acid.

How does it work?

Calcium folinate is not a chemotherapy agent, however is used in combination with methotrexate to reduce its side effects. Methotrexate inhibits nucleic acid synthesis by blocking the activation of folic acid. Calcium folinate is folic acid in the active form, and when given, it allows nucleic acid synthesis to proceed even in the presence of methotrexate. It is given after the administration of methotrexate is complete to “rescue” the normal cells in the body from the side effects of methotrexate.

How is it given?

Calcium folinate is administered as an intravenous (IV) injection over 3 to 5 minutes. Calcium folinate can also be given by mouth as a tablet.

Special instructions:

- Calcium folinate is always given at regular intervals after receiving high doses of methotrexate.
- In some patients who are extremely susceptible to the side effects of methotrexate, calcium folinate is also given after low doses of intravenous, oral or intrathecal methotrexate.
- After receiving a high dose of methotrexate, the level of methotrexate in your blood will be monitored. Depending on your blood levels, the number and frequency of calcium folinate doses may be increased.
- It is important to take the calcium folinate at planned times to maintain a constant amount in your blood. Do not miss any doses of calcium folinate.

Possible Side Effects:

Listed below, but not limited to, are the more commonly experienced side effects that you may see. The side effects your child might experience may be temporary and some may be permanent.

	Likely Happens to 21-100 children out of every 100	Less Likely Happens to 5-20 children out of every 100	Rare but serious Happens to <5 children out of every 100
Immediate Within 1-2 days of receiving the medicine		▪ Rash with itching and/or hives	▪ Severe allergic reaction which can be life threatening with shortness of breath, low blood pressure, rapid heart rate, chills and fever ▪ Seizures

This information sheet is a brief overview. Each individual can respond differently to the medication, it is vital that you communicate all signs and symptoms you observe to your doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions about the information provided please discuss them with your oncologist or haematologist.

Further information can be obtained from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or at the following website:
<http://medsafe.govt.nz/consumers/medicine/where.asp>