

Meningococcal Disease

Ciprofloxacin information

What is Ciprofloxacin?

Ciprofloxacin is an antibiotic drug given to very close contacts of a suspected or confirmed case of meningococcal disease.

It is given to remove meningococcal bacteria commonly found in the back of the throat to reduce the risk of disease-causing strains of the bacteria being passed on to other people.

What you need to tell your doctor

Ciprofloxacin is not recommended for children under 12 years of age and not suitable for everyone so please tell the doctor if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to Ciprofloxacin in the past
- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- are taking other medicines, particularly 'blood-thinning' tablets.

Taking antibiotics

All antibiotics carry a potential risk of allergic reactions. If you experience symptoms such as itchy skin, facial swelling or difficulty breathing you should seek urgent medical attention from the nearest hospital emergency department and consider calling an ambulance.

Ciprofloxacin is taken as a single 500mg dose. The tablet should be swallowed whole with a glass of water.

It should be taken on an empty stomach at least half an hour before or at least two hours after eating. The most common side-effect from taking Ciprofloxacin is mild nausea.

Delay taking the tablet if you have taken antacid (indigestion) medicines or iron or mineral supplements within the last four hours.

If you cannot take Ciprofloxacin for any reason please consult your doctor for advice on alternative treatments.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease

Infants and young children:

- Fever
- Refusing to take feeds
- Irritability, fretfulness, grunting or moaning
- Extreme tiredness
- Floppiness
- Dislike of being handled
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Turning away from light (photophobia)
- Convulsions or twitching
- Rash of red-purple pinprick spots or larger bruises

Older children and adults:

- Fever
- Headache
- General malaise
- Neck stiffness
- Discomfort when looking at bright lights (photophobia)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Muscles aches
- Painful or swollen joints and/or difficulty walking
- Moaning, unintelligible speech
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Collapse
- Rash of red-purple pinprick spots or larger bruises

Symptoms of meningococcal disease

These antibiotics do not treat someone already incubating the disease. Although the risk of contacts developing meningococcal disease is extremely low, it is important to look out for the symptoms listed in the table. It may take up to seven days for the signs of meningococcal disease to appear.

Signs and symptoms can appear very quickly, and people with meningococcal disease can get much worse within a few hours. You know your family and best friends better than anybody else.

If you or someone close to you has some of these signs, and appears to be much sicker than usual, seek medical attention from your doctor or nearest hospital emergency department immediately. Please take this fact sheet with you.

Further information

Call the Public Health Hotline – Tasmania on 1800 671 738 to speak to a clinical nurse consultant.

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