

RIFAMPIN

Rifampin for the Prevention of Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis* found in your nose and throat. These bacteria can cause serious and life-threatening infections including meningitis, an infection of the lining that covers the brain, and septicemia, an infection of the blood. Fever, severe headache, and stiff neck may be signs of a meningococcal infection. Meningococcal infection is spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. It can also be spread through saliva through activities such as using the same eating utensils; kissing; drinking from the same glass or water bottle; or sharing joints, cigarettes, musical mouthpieces, or lipstick.

Rifampin is an antibiotic prescribed for close contacts of people who are ill with meningococcal disease. Such close contacts may be carrying the bacteria in their throat but not have any symptoms of this infection. Rifampin will eliminate the meningococcal bacteria from the nose and throat and lessen the risk of getting meningococcal disease or spreading the infection to others.

- Rifampin when used to prevent meningitis is usually taken by mouth twice a day for 2 days (total of 4 doses).
- Doses should be taken 12 hours apart on an empty stomach (one hour before or two to three hours after eating food).
- It is important that you take all of the doses prescribed. Your dose of rifampin is based on your age and weight. For infants and young children unable to swallow capsules, a pharmacist can prepare the rifampin as a liquid suspension.
- To provide timely protection, you will not be tested to see if you are carrying the bacteria prior to treatment.

Allergies

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have an allergy to rifampin, or any other rifamycin antibiotics including rifabutin or rifapentine.

Pregnancy and Breast/Chest Feeding

- Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant or are breast/chest feeding.
- Individuals who are breast/chest feeding can take rifampin, as only small amounts are secreted into breast milk.

Caution

Tell your healthcare provider if:

- You have liver disease
- You are taking any other medications including non-prescription medications and do not start a new medication without consulting with a doctor/prescriber or pharmacist
- **Drug Interactions:** Please note that individual drug interactions are not listed in this document. If you are taking any prescription, non-prescription, herbal, or recreational products, please discuss with your healthcare provider.
- Rifampin may cause estrogen-containing contraceptives to be less effective. You will need to use a second form of birth control (e.g., condoms/diaphragm) to prevent pregnancy for at least 28 days after completing a course of rifampin. Ask your health care provider for advice.

Side Effects

Side effects of rifampin may include the following:

- harmless, reddish-orange discoloration of your urine, feces, tears, sweat, teeth, or saliva
- stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea
- bruising of the skin
- headache
- sore mouth or throat
- muscle or bone pain
- yellowing of the skin or eyes

Note: You should not wear soft contact lenses until the course of rifampin is completed as rifampin may cause permanent staining of soft contact lenses.

Seek medical attention immediately if you should develop any unusual symptoms, including, but not limited to:

- skin rash, itching, or hives
- difficulty breathing or swallowing
- swelling of the face or throat

Vaccine for meningococcal disease

In addition to receiving this antibiotic, it may be recommended that you get immunized to provide long term protection against meningococcal disease. The type of vaccine(s) given will depend on the strain of the bacteria that caused the disease. Speak to your healthcare provider for more information.