

Dapsone

Information for patients



Your doctor has prescribed dapsone to treat your skin condition. Dapsone is a very effective drug and is a very good treatment for a number of skin diseases.

Blood tests

As with all medicines, some patients may experience side effects. In a very small number of patients, dapsone can cause serious side effects. We aim to pick up on any problems before you feel unwell which is why you will be asked to have regular blood tests.

We recommend that these are done:

- Weekly – for the first month after you start dapsone;
- Monthly – for the next three months;
- After this, once every three months.

If your dose is increased you will be asked to have weekly tests again.

Side effects

Some people experience mild headaches or sickness, which may improve with time on treatment.

Changes in the pigment in your blood (haemoglobin) can cause a bluish discoloration of your lips and fingertips. This does not cause other symptoms and will go away when dapsone treatment is no longer needed.

Shortness of breath, tiredness and anaemia are a rare side effect. They are much more likely if you have a genetic condition called glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. People of Mediterranean, African and Asian ancestry are more at risk of this and can be tested for this condition before dapsone is prescribed.

Rarely dapsonone can cause a fall in the blood cells that fight infection. This can cause mouth ulcers, fevers, sore throats and easy bruising. **You should see your GP if you experience any of these symptoms.** Your GP will then take a blood test to find out whether these symptoms are related to your dapsonone treatment or if they are just due to a co-incidental infection.

Rarely, if dapsonone is used for a long time at high doses people can experience reduced function of the nerves in their limbs; causing weakness of muscles in the hands and feet. You should let your doctor know if you have these symptoms and you have been on dapsonone for a long time.

Very rarely, dapsonone can cause jaundice (yellow skin and whites of eyes), or a rash with a fever and swollen glands. **Please see your doctor immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.**

Taking dapsonone with other medicines

If you are taking dapsonone you should check with your doctor before taking the following medicines:

- probenecid
- rifampicin
- trimethoprim
- Septrin

If you are prescribed any new medicines, please tell the doctor that you are taking dapsonone.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Dapsonone has been used safely in pregnancy but you should take folic acid supplements before conception (getting pregnant) and

during pregnancy. Please talk with your doctor if you are planning a pregnancy.

Dapsone passes into breast milk and can be harmful to babies with G6PD deficiency. There have not been any problems reported in other babies.

If you need to contact us

Between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday:

Churchill Dermatology Secretaries: 01865 228 224

Horton Hospital Dermatology Secretary: 01295 229 683

After 5pm and before 9am please contact your GP.

If you are unable to contact your GP, and you do not think you can wait until office hours please go to your nearest A&E department.

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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