Anti-MAP therapy for Crohn’s disease – what you need to know

The leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking anti-MAP therapy. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist caring for you.

What is anti-MAP therapy?
*Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP) is a bacteria that causes inflammation of the intestine in livestock, this is called Johne’s disease.

There is a view that MAP may also cause or be an important factor in the development of Crohn’s disease.

Anti-MAP therapy is a prolonged course of antibiotics selected to remove MAP from the body and as a result may improve Crohn’s disease. Anti-MAP therapy is normally reserved for patients with complicated or difficult-to-treat Crohn’s disease that hasn’t responded to the usual medicines.

How do I take the medicine?
You will be prescribed a course of three antibiotics:
- **Clarithromycin** twice daily
- **Rifabutin** twice daily (the dose will increase over the first couple of weeks)
- **Clofazimine** once daily

You will be assessed three to four months after starting the antibiotics, and if your symptoms are improving then you will continue the medicines for two years.

What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?
If you miss a dose then take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is close to the time your next dose is due do not take the missed dose and continue with your normal schedule.

Are there any side effects?
It is not uncommon to get mild side effects like diarrhoea and nausea, a metallic taste in the mouth along with muscle and joint aches. These usually settle on their own.
- Abnormal liver blood tests including jaundice (yellow discolouration of the eyes and skin) can occur with these antibiotics, so it is important that your blood tests are checked regularly.
- Discolouration of teeth, tears and sometimes the skin, along with dark urine can occur with rifabutin and clofazimine.
- Uveitis (inflammation of the middle layer of the eye) can occur with rifabutin. If this happens then your consultant will stop the medication and prescribe steroid eye drops.
- Leucopenia (low white blood cell count) can occur with rifabutin. Symptoms such as fever, chills, headaches, sweating, a sore throat or mouth, mouth ulcers and swollen glands may indicate that the medicines are reducing your white blood cell count. If you develop these symptoms please contact your GP as you will need a blood test and may need to stop taking the medicine.
- There could be additional side effects if used with other less commonly prescribed medicines, so it is important to tell all doctors that are prescribing medicines for you that you are on anti-MAP therapy.
- Everyone reacts differently to medicines so if you have any concerns please contact the IBD Helpline (details at the end of the leaflet).

Is there anything else I need to know?
- When you first start the anti-MAP therapy you will need regular blood tests. Your full blood count (FBC) and liver function tests (LFT) need to be checked two, four, eight and 12 weeks after starting the medications.
- If your blood tests are stable after three months of treatment then you will continue to have them checked at three-monthly intervals.

How do I get a repeat prescription?
Initially your consultant at the hospital will provide your prescription but when the medication doses are stable and you have completed three months of blood test monitoring, your GP should take over the prescription. In some situations clofazimine will have to continue to be prescribed and dispensed by the hospital.

Useful sources of information
Crohn’s and Colitis UK, w: www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about anti-MAP therapy, please call the IBD Helpline, t: 020 7188 2487 and leave a message or e: ibdhelpline@gstt.nhs.uk. Messages will be responded to Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
 t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)  
**e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk  
**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)  
**e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

**t:** 020 7188 8815  
**e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

NHS Choices
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

**t:** 0800 731 0319  
**e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk  
**w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership