

Metronidazole

Names	The generic drug name is metronidazole (me-troe-NI-da-zole). The brand name is Flagyl®. There may be other names for this medication.
What is it Used For?	Metronidazole is an antibiotic used to treat infections. It is in a class of medications called nitroimidazole antimicrobials and works by stopping the growth of bacteria.
How is it Administered?	Your medicine may be taken orally as a tablet or capsule or given as an injection. Metronidazole is also used to treat vaginal infections as a cream or suppository.
How Does it Work?	Metronidazole works by disrupting the structure of the DNA in bacteria and inhibiting the bacteria's ability to create nucleic acids, which are the basic units of DNA.
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have had an allergic reaction to metronidazole, or any other medications, foods, preservatives, or dyes• a history of alcohol abuse• have Crohn's disease, or a blood, kidney, or liver disease• are pregnant or breastfeeding <p>This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.</p>
What Are Some Possible Side Effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GI problems: stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation• Dry mouth, metal taste in mouth• Dark urine• Photosensitivity (skin is more sensitive to sunlight)• Fever, headache, mouth sores, irritability, mood changes (less common)

Serious but uncommon side effects

- Problems with muscle control or coordination (example: unsteady walk), changes in speech or vision, confusion, weakness in the arms, hands, legs, or feet
- Burning, numbness, tingling, or painful sensations in the hands or feet (peripheral neuropathy)

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Nausea: If you have stomach problems or diarrhea, avoid greasy, fried, and spicy foods. Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea
- Diarrhea: Check with your doctor about what over the counter products are safe to use.
- Dry mouth: For temporary relief, use sugarless candy or gum, melt bits of ice in your mouth, or use a saliva substitute. However, if your mouth continues to feel dry for more than 2 weeks, check with your medical doctor or dentist. Continuing dryness of the mouth may increase the chance of dental disease, including tooth decay, gum disease, and fungus infections.
- Photosensitivity: Avoid unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight. Wear sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher. Wear protective clothing – long sleeves and pants, hat, sunglasses – when in the sun, even if just for a short while.
- Check with your doctor before taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for headache, fever, or other side effects

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Let your doctor or nurse know immediately if you have:

- signs of an allergic reaction: skin rash, hives, itching. Call 911 or go to the emergency room if you have signs of severe reaction: fast or irregular breathing; swelling in throat, face, tongue; shortness of breath; gray or blue skin/lip discoloration
- numbness, tingling, pain, or weakness in hands or feet

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- unusual bleeding or bruising: black, tarry stools or blood in urine or stools, pinpoint red spots on skin
- clumsiness or unsteadiness
- urination problems such as frequent/painful urination
- mood or other mental changes

Continued on next page

- sore throat and fever
- severe stomach or back pain
- vaginal irritation, discharge, or dryness you didn't have before starting this medicine
- If you have injection/infusion: Pain, tenderness, redness, or swelling over the vein in which the medicine is given

What Else Should I Know About Flagyl?

- To help clear up your infection completely, *keep taking this medicine for the full time of treatment*, even if you begin to feel better after a few days. If you stop taking this medicine too soon, your symptoms may return.
- If this medicine upsets your stomach, take it with food. If GI problems continue, check with your doctor. If you are taking the extended-release formulation, you should try to take it an hour before or two hours after your meal.
- To help keep the amount of medication in your blood constant, do not miss any doses and take your medicine at evenly spaced times, day and night.
- If you miss a dose of this medicine, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double doses.
- Store away from heat, direct light, and moisture. (Not in the bathroom)
- **Do not drink alcohol or use any products that contain alcohol while taking this medicine and for 3 days after you have stopped the medicine. . Drinking alcoholic beverages while taking this medicine may cause stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, headache, or flushing or redness of the face.**
- This medicine may also cause some people to become dizzy or lightheaded. Make sure you know how you react to this medicine before you drive or use heavy machinery.
- If you become pregnant call your doctor, as this drug may be harmful to the fetus in the first few months of pregnancy.
- If you would like more information, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.