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An HIV Information Site & HIV Educational Resource Site (HIS & HERS)

atovaquone - Mepron

General Information

Atovaquone (Mepron) is an antibiotic that is used to treat and prevent an opportunistic pneumonia that is common for persons with AIDS.

Specifics

Atovaquone is a well-respected and very effective antibiotic. It has a long track record of effectiveness and safety. However, no antibiotic works 100% of the time against pneumocystis.

Atovaquone works by inhibiting the production of energy in parasitic organisms such as *Pneumocystis carinii*. Atovaquone is used for a variety of purposes including but not limited to the following:

1. To treat mild to moderate pneumocystis pneumonia when other drugs are not tolerated.
2. To prevent pneumocystis pneumonia when other drugs are not tolerated
3. To treat certain other parasitic infections such as toxoplasmosis or malaria.

Dosing

Atovaquone is available in capsule or suspension form. The suspension form is preferable owing to it's better absorption.

If used to treat pneumocystis pneumonia, the usual dose is 750 mg of the suspension (1 teaspoon or 5cc) every 12 hours with food.

If atovaquone is taken to prevent pneumocystis pneumonia, the dose is 1500 mg (2 teaspoons or 10cc) every 24 hours.

Adherence

This refers to your willingness, ability, and actual performance in taking your medications.

For further information and tips on adherence, go to the **Adherence section** of this site.

It is very important to take every dose that is prescribed unless instructed by your healthcare provider.

Do not adjust the dose or frequency of atovaquone without speaking to your healthcare provider first.

If you miss doses while being treated for pneumonia, your pneumonia may worsen, and pneumocystis pneumonia is potentially deadly.

If you miss doses while atovaquone is being used for prevention, you may develop pneumocystis pneumonia which is possibly deadly.

It is strongly recommended that you consider using weekly pill boxes and arrange all of your doses a week in advance. Buy a small pill box so that you can carry a dose or two of your medicines with you in case you are away from home.

Possible Side Effects

The package insert for most drugs including atovaquone is often overwhelming and scary with perhaps an overemphasis on side effects. We have summarized the important and more common problems here.

Most people take atovaquone without any or very many side effects.

Many side effects get better with time.

The most frequent side effects of atovaquone are a bad taste, nausea, diarrhea, headache, or rash.

Allergic rashes can be very minor to very serious (rarely,) but all rashes should be reported. If you have rash that steadily gets worse or you have a rash and fever, you need to inform your healthcare provider immediately.

Interactions

This refers to the way that rifabutin affects other medications and how other medications might affect rifabutin.

Usually atovaquone should not be taken with rifampin which is an antibiotic used to treat tuberculosis and other infections.

Make sure that your healthcare provider is aware of all the medications you are taking so that important and possibly dangerous interactions are not overlooked.

Report to you healthcare provider or go to an Emergency Room if you have severe side effects, increasing side effects, increasing shortness of breath, fever, eye pain or redness, loss of vision, jaundice (eyes and skin turn yellow,) nausea and vomiting (so that you cannot hold down your food and liquids) or rash.

You can download this handout in PDF format by clicking [HERE](#).

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