

Co-trimoxazole

Sulfamethoxazole with trimethoprim

(Bactrim®, Septrin®, Resprim®)

What is co-trimoxazole?

Co-trimoxazole contains 2 antibiotics, sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim, which work together to treat infections caused by bacteria. Sulfamethoxazole belongs to a class of drugs called sulfonamides whilst trimethoprim belongs to a class of drugs called benzyl pyrimidines. It is only available with a doctor's prescription.

What is it for?

Co-trimoxazole works by stopping the growth of bacteria causing the infection. It can be used to treat infections of the:

- ear, nose and throat
- lungs
- kidneys and urinary tract
- diarrhoea caused by bacteria
- skin.

It can also be used as a preventative agent to reduce the risk of infection in some situations.

How to take this medication

It is important that this medication is taken only as directed and not given to other people. Co-trimoxazole should be given with or after food. It is normally prescribed once or twice a day and should be given at about the same time each day. Plenty of water should be given while on co-trimoxazole.

It is important to take the full course of treatment.

If using the mixture, shake the bottle well before each dose and measure accurately using a syringe or medicine cup/device.

What to do if a dose is missed

If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the dose missed and give the next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, give the medication as soon as you remember and then go back to giving the medicine as usual.

Do not try to make up for missed dose(s) by giving more than one dose at a time. This can increase the risk of side effects.



Storing the medication

It is important to keep co-trimoxazole locked away out of the reach of children.

Tablets and suspension: Store below 30°C.

Do not keep the medicine in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or any other damp, warm place, because this may make the medication less effective.

Keep the tablets in the blister pack until it is time to give them. The mixture does not need to be kept in the refrigerator unless room temperature exceeds 30°C.

Use of other medication

Co-trimoxazole can interact with several other medications so it is important to advise your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medication. This includes medicines that you buy without a prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

These include:

- warfarin
- angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors
- methotrexate
- ciclosporin (cyclosporin)
- phenytoin
- some drugs used to treat diabetes (for example gliclazide).

Important information

It is important to give the full course of co-trimoxazole even if the infection has cleared up and your child feels better.

Your child may be more sensitive to sunlight and burn more easily while taking this medicine. Reduce exposure to sunlight by wearing a hat, light loose clothing and apply SPF 30+ sunscreen on exposed skin areas.

Do not give co-trimoxazole to your child if they have had an allergic reaction to any drugs containing sulphur.

Possible side effects

Side effects can occur while taking co-trimoxazole. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been modified. Others are more serious and require you to check with your child's doctor.

Less serious side effects include:

- stomach upset or cramps
- nausea or vomiting
- poor appetite
- diarrhoea
- oral thrush (white, furry, sore tongue and mouth)
- vaginal thrush (sore and itchy vagina, vaginal discharge).

Contact your child's doctor **as soon as possible** if any of the following side effects occur:

- any type of skin rash or skin eruption or peeling of the skin
- shortness of breath, wheezing or trouble breathing
- swelling of the mouth, eyelids or face
- sore throat, fever or chills
- extreme weakness or tiredness
- yellowing of the skin or eyes
- severe persistent headache
- severe watery diarrhoea even if it occurs several weeks after stopping the co-trimoxazole.

If you are worried about any of these side effects or any other effects, please contact your child's doctor.

Commercially available dosage forms and strengths

- Tablets containing 400mg/80mg (sulfamethoxazole / trimethoprim) as a single strength.
- Tablets containing 800mg/160mg (sulfamethoxazole / trimethoprim) as a double strength.
- Mixture 200mg/40mg (sulfamethoxazole / trimethoprim) per 5mL.

Your hospital pharmacy will advise you if they manufacture any additional dosage forms to the above.

If you have any concerns, contact your child's doctor or the PCH Pharmacy Department.

Dispensary: 6456 0190 – select option 2

Paediatric Medicines Information Service: 6456 0190 – select option 1

In case of overdose or poisoning contact the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26.



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