

## Antibiotics for Contacts of a Person With a Meningococcal Infection: Ciprofloxacin, Rifampicin



January 2002

### Ciprofloxacin

Ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic, is sometimes given to those in close contact with a person who has developed a meningococcal infection. The purpose of this antibiotic is to get rid of any meningococcal germs being 'carried' in the throat of contact(s), so that it cannot lead to further infections.

**NB:** The antibiotic cannot treat someone who is already developing the infection.

You need to know what signs (of meningococcal infections) to look out for regardless of taking ciprofloxacin.

The dose of ciprofloxacin is a **single dose** of 500mg taken in tablet form.

You should **not** take this medicine if:

- you have had a previous allergic reaction to ciprofloxacin
- you are pregnant or breast feeding.

It is quite safe to take ciprofloxacin if you are on the birth control pill.

It is important that you take your tablet as follows:

- The tablet should be swallowed whole with a full glass of water.
- Do not take the tablet if you have taken antacid/indigestion medicines or medicines containing iron or mineral supplements within the last 4 hours.
- Do not take alcohol with this medicine as it may make you drowsy affecting your ability to drive or operate machinery.

A **very** uncommon side effect of an allergic reaction with facial swelling, tightness in the throat or breathing difficulty has been reported in about 1 in 1000 people following a single dose of ciprofloxacin. This might happen soon after taking the tablet. If it happens you should seek medical attention **immediately**.

## Rifampicin

Rifampicin, an antibiotic, is given to those in close contact with a person who has developed a meningococcal infection. The purpose of this antibiotic is to get rid of any meningococcal germs being 'carried' in the throat of contact(s), so that it cannot lead to further infections.

**NB:** The antibiotic cannot treat someone who is already developing the infection.

You need to know what signs (of meningococcal infections) to look out for regardless of taking rifampicin.

Rifampicin should **not** be taken by a person who

- has yellow jaundice (a liver problem)
- is pregnant.

Rifampicin is taken twice a day for 2 days (a total of four doses). It should be taken on an empty stomach, half an hour before or two hours after food. A few people feel 'off' after taking rifampicin. Stomach upset, headache and dizziness can occur.

Rifampicin can also make urine and tears a pink-orange colour. This discolouration is harmless and stops when the medication is discontinued. Rifampicin can permanently stain soft contact lenses so use during treatment should be avoided.

## Interactions with other medicines:

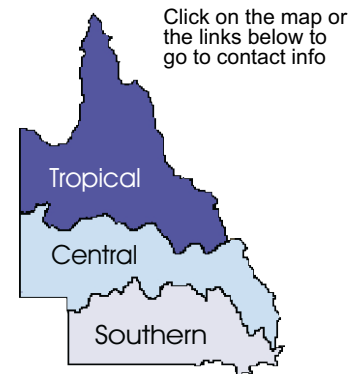
If you are taking any of the following prescription drugs, notify your doctor that you will be taking rifampicin as the dosage of your medication may need adjustment while on rifampicin:

- anticoagulants such as warfarin
- steroids
- several drugs for heart disease
- tablets to control diabetes
- tablets for epilepsy
- tablets for asthma
- methadone
- some antidepressants.

Women taking the contraceptive pill should continue to take it, omitting any pill free interval, while taking rifampicin **and** for the seven days after the last dose of rifampicin. They should **also** use additional barrier contraception while taking rifampicin and for four weeks after the last dose of rifampicin.

For more information see the [Meningococcal Disease fact sheet](#) or contact your local Public Health Unit.

## For more information, contact your local public health network



**Central Public Health Unit Network** servicing Brisbane Northside, Longreach, Redcliffe, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Wide Bay. For contact details go to <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/phs/cphun/>

**Southern Public Health Unit Network** servicing Brisbane Southside, Darling Downs, Roma, South Coast, South West Queensland, West Moreton. For contact details go to <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/phs/sphun/>

**Tropical Public Health Unit Network** servicing Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa and Gulf, Townsville. For contact details go to <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/phs/tphun/>

For medical advice, contact your doctor, hospital or health clinic.

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