Sulfamethoxazole and Trimethoprim

What is sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim (Bactrim) and how does it work?

Sulfamethoxazole (SUL fa meth OX a zole) and trimethoprim (trye METH oh prim) is a combination antibiotic used to prevent or treat certain types of infections. These infections may include urinary tract infections, ear infections, bronchitis, certain types of pneumonia and certain types of diarrhea. This medicine may also be used for other types of infections not listed.

What should I tell my doctor before I start this treatment?

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or become pregnant while taking this medicine. This medicine can harm an unborn baby. **Do not use if you are pregnant.**

Tell your doctor if you have ever had or currently have:

- Kidney or liver disease
- HIV or AIDS
- Asthma
- Severe allergies
- A thyroid disorder
- A low level of folate (folic acid)
- Poor nutrition (malnourishment)
- Alcoholism
- An electrolyte imbalance (such as low sodium or low potassium)
- Porphyria
- Glucose-6-phophate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency
- Use blood thinners and have regular blood tests drawn such as “INR” or prothrombin time

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- There are certain situations in which you should not take this medicine. Tell your doctor if you:
  - ▶ Had an allergic reaction to sulfamethoxazole or trimethoprim in the past
  - ▶ Have severe liver disease
  - ▶ Have kidney disease that is not being treated or monitored
  - ▶ Have low red blood cells (called anemia) caused by a low level of folic acid
  - ▶ Have a history of low blood platelets after taking trimethoprim or any sulfa drug
  - ▶ Currently take dofetilide
- Make sure you tell your doctor of all prescription and over the counter medicines you take. Include telling your doctor about any vitamins and herbal products. Let your doctor know if you start any new medicine or stop taking current medicine while you are receiving sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim. This is important for your doctor to know to avoid drug interactions with sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim.

How should I take this medicine?

It is important to always read the directions on your prescription label including all medicine guides and instruction sheets. Only use the medicine as noted on these directions and in the way it was ordered by your doctor.

There are two ways (routes) in which you can get this medicine. Your doctor may order your medicine to be taken **by mouth (orally) or through an injection**. Your medicine is prepared by the pharmacy based on the way your doctor has ordered for you to take it.

- Sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim **oral** is taken by mouth.
  - ▶ It may be supplied as a tablet or liquid (oral suspension)
  - ▶ If the liquid (oral suspension) is prescribed, shake the bottle before carefully measuring your ordered dose using the measuring tool from the pharmacy. Do not use a kitchen spoon.
- Sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim **injection** is given into a vein.
  - ▶ Your doctor will give you more information if you are to get this medicine by injection.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

Common side effects include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Skin rash

When should I call my doctor?

You should call your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms or problems:

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

A fever can be life threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.

- Skin or eyes become yellow
- Blood in your urine
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- New or increased joint pain
- Urinating more or less often than usual
- Increased thirst
- Dry mouth
- Fruity odor to your breath
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours), including bloody or black tarry stools
- Symptoms of high blood potassium which may include nausea, weakness, tingly feeling, chest pain, irregular heartbeats, loss of movement
- Symptoms of low blood sodium which may include headache, confusion, problems with thinking or memory, weakness, feeling unsteady

- Symptoms of low blood cell counts which may include fever, chills, mouth sores, skin sores, easy bruising, unusual bleeding, pale skin, cold hands and feet, feeling lightheaded or short of breath
- Any other new symptoms or concern

Get emergency help for:

- Seizure
- Signs of an allergic reaction, including:
  - ► Difficulty breathing (shortness of breath), cough, chest pain
  - ► Swelling in your face, lips, tongue, or throat
  - ► Severe skin reaction; sore throat, burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash with blistering and peeling

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- Use all of the medicine ordered by your doctor. Do not skip doses or stop taking the medicine if you start to feel better.
- Your doctor may order blood or urine tests while you are taking this medicine. Based on the results of these tests this medicine could be stopped.
- Work with your doctor to use methods to prevent pregnancy while taking this medicine.
- Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeine fluids each day to help prevent kidney stones.
- Note that antibiotics will not treat viral infections.
- If you use the injection form of this medicine do not eat or drink anything that contains propylene glycol (can be found in processed food, soft drinks and some medicines). This will help avoid dangerous side effects.
- Keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children and pets.
- Never share your medicine with others.