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## Metyrapone (Metopirone)

Metyrapone will be prescribed for you by a specialist doctor.

You will be told how many capsules to take and when to take them. If you are unsure about this, you should ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain it to you again.

You may feel dizzy or sleepy while you are on metyrapone. If you are a driver, make sure these effects have worn off before you drive.

### About metyrapone

Type of medicine	A medicine which reduces the amount of cortisol and aldosterone produced by the body
Used for	The diagnosis or treatment of Cushing's syndrome The treatment of fluid retention associated with some kidney, liver and heart conditions
Also called	Metopirone®
Available as	Capsules

Metyrapone is a medicine which can be used to diagnose [Cushing's syndrome](#). It is also occasionally prescribed to treat Cushing's syndrome. Cushing's syndrome is a condition where the level of a substance, called cortisol, in your body is too high over a long period of time. Cortisol is a hormone which helps your body react in a normal way to stress. It also helps regulate your blood pressure, your immune system and your blood sugar levels. Your body normally keeps the level of cortisol within a certain range so that there is neither too much nor too little. When you produce too much cortisol, a number of symptoms can develop over time although these can be fairly nonspecific, such as putting on weight, muscle weakness and bruising easily. Metyrapone helps prevent the over-production of cortisol and this helps to control these symptoms.

Metyrapone is also used to treat some types of water retention caused by an increased amount of a hormone called aldosterone. This type of water retention can occur if you have a kidney problem, [liver cirrhosis](#), or [heart failure](#). Water retention occurs when there is a build-up of fluid in your body. It can make your feet or face swollen and puffy.

## Before taking metyrapone

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking metyrapone it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have been told that you have underactive thyroid, pituitary or adrenal glands.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works.
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have a rare inherited blood disorder called porphyria.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

## How to take metyrapone

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about metyrapone and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience from taking it.
- Metyrapone will be prescribed for you initially by a specialist doctor in a hospital. Your dose will depend upon the reason why you are taking it, so your doctor will tell you how many capsules to take and when to take them. This information will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you about what the doctor said. Take the capsules exactly as your doctor tells you to.
- Swallow the capsules whole - do not chew them before you swallow.
- Take the capsules with a drink of milk or just after eating a meal. This will help prevent you from feeling sick after taking your doses.
- Try to get into a habit of taking your doses at the same times of day each day. This will help you to remember to take the capsules regularly.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If when you remember, it is almost time to take your next dose then skip the missed dose and take your next dose when it is due. Do not take two doses together to make up for a forgotten dose.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- People with ectopic Cushing's syndrome who take metyrapone may be more prone to getting certain infections. Your doctor will discuss the risks with you and may prescribe preventative antibiotic treatment.

## Can metyrapone cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the ones occasionally associated with metyrapone. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<b>Occasional metyrapone side-effects</b>	<b>What can I do if I experience this?</b>
Feeling dizzy or sleepy	Do not drive and do not use tools or machines while affected
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)	Stick to simple foods - avoid rich or spicy meals
Feeling dizzy or light-headed particularly when you stand up	Try getting up or moving more slowly. If you begin to feel faint, sit down for a few minutes to allow the feeling to pass
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, let your doctor know

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the capsules, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

## How to store metyrapone

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

# Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, please tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

If you buy any medicines, check with a doctor or pharmacist that they are suitable for you to take with your other medicines.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Metyrapone 250 mg capsules](#); HRA Pharma UK and Ireland Limited, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated June 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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