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## Co-amoxiclav for infections (Augmentin)

Make sure you tell your doctor if you are allergic to penicillin. Co-amoxiclav is a type of penicillin – do **not** take it if you are allergic to penicillin.

Space your doses out evenly over the day and complete the full course of this antibiotic, even if you feel your infection has cleared up. You can take co-amoxiclav before or after food.

If you have an allergic reaction (such as any swelling around your mouth, any difficulties breathing or a red rash) contact a doctor for advice straightaway.

### About co-amoxiclav

|                  |                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Type of medicine | Penicillin antibiotic                       |
| Used for         | Infections (in adults and children)         |
| Also called      | Augmentin®                                  |
| Available as     | Tablets, oral liquid medicine and injection |

Co-amoxiclav is given to treat bacterial infections. It is prescribed for sinus infections, urine infections, skin infections, joint infections and some dental infections. It is also given before some surgical operations, to prevent an infection from developing.

Co-amoxiclav contains two ingredients, amoxicillin and clavulanic acid. The first ingredient, amoxicillin, is a penicillin antibiotic which treats infection by killing the bacteria responsible for the infection. Some bacteria are able to produce a chemical which makes amoxicillin less effective. The second ingredient, clavulanic acid, stops this from happening. Clavulanic acid stops the chemical produced by the bacteria from working, and this allows the amoxicillin to kill the bacteria.

## **Before taking co-amoxiclav**

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 co-amoxiclav it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you suspect you may have glandular fever.
- If you have an allergic condition, or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine. This is especially important if you have ever had a bad reaction to any penicillin antibiotic.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Co-amoxiclav is not known to be harmful to babies; however, it is still important that you tell your doctor if you are expecting or breastfeeding a baby.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or problems with the way your kidneys work.
- If you are taking 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.

## **How to take co-amoxiclav**

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about co-amoxiclav and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.

- Take co-amoxiclav exactly as your doctor tells you to. It is usually taken three times daily, every eight hours. It is important that you space out the doses evenly during the day. Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you how many tablets (or how much liquid medicine) to take for each dose, and this information will be printed on the label of the pack to remind you. If you have been given liquid medicine for a child, read the directions carefully to make sure you measure out the correct amount of medicine.
- Try to drink plenty of water while you are taking co-amoxiclav, to help keep your kidneys working well. You can take your doses before or after food.
- If you forget to take a dose, take one as soon as you remember. Try to take the correct number of doses each day, but do not take two doses at the same time to make up for a forgotten dose.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- If you (or your child) have been prescribed the oral liquid medicine, you may find that it causes some staining of the teeth. This will disappear soon after the course of antibiotics is finished.
- Even if you feel your infection has cleared up, keep taking the antibiotic until the course is finished, unless you are told to stop. This is to prevent the infection from coming back. Your doctor will tell you how long your course of treatment will last - this is not usually for longer than 14 days. If you still feel unwell after finishing the course, go back to see your doctor.
- Some people develop redness and itching in the mouth or vagina (thrush) after taking a course of antibiotics. If this happens to you, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- If you are taking the contraceptive 'pill' at the same time as this antibiotic, the effectiveness of the 'pill' can be reduced if you have a bout of being sick (vomiting) or diarrhoea which lasts for more than 24 hours. If this should happen, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice about what additional contraceptive precautions to use over the next few days. There is no need to use additional precautions for any bouts of sickness or diarrhoea which last for less than 24 hours.

- Co-amoxiclav may stop the oral typhoid vaccine from working. If you are having any vaccinations, make sure the person treating you knows that you are taking this antibiotic.

## Can co-amoxiclav 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 most common ones associated with co-amoxiclav. 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>Very common co-amoxiclav side-effects (these affect more than 1 in 10 people)</b> | <b>What can I do if I experience this?</b>                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Diarrhoea                                                                            | Drink plenty of water to replace any lost fluids. If the diarrhoea continues, becomes severe, or contains blood, let your doctor know <b>straightaway</b> |
| <b>Common co-amoxiclav side-effects (these affect fewer than 1 in 10 people)</b>     | <b>What can I do if I experience this?</b>                                                                                                                |
| Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)                                       | You can reduce this by taking your doses at a mealtime                                                                                                    |
| Redness and itching in the mouth or vagina (thrush)                                  | Speak with your doctor for advice about treatment                                                                                                         |

**Important:** if you develop an itchy rash, swollen face or mouth, or have difficulty breathing, these may be signs that you are allergic to a penicillin antibiotic. Do not take any more co-amoxiclav and speak with your doctor or go to your local accident and emergency department straightaway.

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

## How to store co-amoxiclav

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Keep co-amoxiclav liquid medicine in a refrigerator, and do not use it after the expiry date on the bottle. It will have been made up by the pharmacy and it is important you do not store or use it for longer than seven days since the date it was made up.
- Store co-amoxiclav tablets 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 buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

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

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.

Report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, e-cigarettes, medical device incidents, defective or falsified (fake) products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to ensure safe and effective use.

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Augmentin® 375 mg tablets](#); GlaxoSmithKline UK, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated July 2022.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Augmentin® 125/31 SF Suspension](#); GlaxoSmithKline UK, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated July 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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