

## Adverse effects of TB medicines

TB medicines can have adverse effects. If you suspect any, let your nurse or doctor know.

Most of the adverse effects of TB drugs are mild and will pass when medication is continued or they can be alleviated. On average, one in ten people receiving usual TB treatment have more severe adverse effects. In such cases, medication may have to be temporarily interrupted.

Taking TB medications and certain other drugs at the same time must be taken into consideration. Therefore, it is important that the doctor is aware of all medications you are taking (medications for diabetes, to prevent blood clots, contraceptives, etc). Tell your doctor if you are taking any herbal medicines or dietary supplements as they can have adverse interactions with TB medications.

Mild adverse effects of TB medication are common and unpleasant, but they do not prevent you from continuing medication. Tell the person responsible for your treatment and they will try to find a way to alleviate them. Mild adverse effects include:

- Orange colored urine, saliva or tears. This is caused by the drug Contact lenses can become discolored, so do not wear them during rifampicin treatment.
- Redness and itching of the skin in sunlight. Some TB medications e.g., pyrazinamide make the skin sensitive to sunlight. Your doctor will advise you to use sunscreen or protect your skin with
- Acne may get worse due to treatment with isoniazide. This can be treated with topical treatments for acne.
- Hair loss may occur due to isoniazide treatment. This problem will go away after treatment is completed.
- There may be episodic redness or itching of the face or scalp 2 to 3 hours after taking rifampicine or pyrazinamide medication. This symptom can be treated with antihistamine products.
- Episodic redness of the face together with a headache, heart palpitations, increase or decrease in blood pressure (which may lead to fainting) is associated with foods containing tyramine or histamine taken during treatment with isoniazid. The onset of the reaction is individual. The reaction can be prevented by avoiding the following foods during isoniazid treatment:
  - Matured cheeses
  - Red wine
  - Tuna
  - Cured sausages
- Fatigue, difficulties concentrating, irritability, mood swings, For these, you may need to speak to someone and receive support from loved ones or peer support.
- Sleep disorders. This can be alleviated with exercise, reducing caffeine consumption and taking melatonin.

- Dry mouth. Take care of good daily oral hygiene, drink enough water (adult at least 1.5 l / day). You can try topical preparations for dry mouth (over-the-counter from a pharmacy) or lubricate the oral mucous membranes with cooking or olive oil.
- Taste of metal in the mouth. Chewing xylitol chewing gum or throat lozenge may relieve the symptom.

Serious adverse effects are rare but when they appear, the medication causing the problem must be stopped, at least temporarily. Contact the person in charge of your treatment or emergency services immediately if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting and severe abdominal ache
- Color of the skin or of white parts of the eye turn yellow.
- These symptoms may be due to hepatitis caused by TB drugs. During the treatment, liver functions are monitored regularly through blood tests
- Fever and itchy skin rash and blistering of the skin
- Swelling of the gums, lips or eyelids and shortness of breath
- Severe pain in joints or muscles, which prevent movement
- Dizziness
- Tinnitus or deterioration of hearing
- Reduction of the amount of urine, color of urine becomes very dark
- Deterioration of vision
- Seizure
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing strange things)
- Suicidal thoughts, strong mood changes

Adverse effects of TB medications can be prevented to some extent. For example, isoniazid-medicine often causes peripheral neuropathy, signs of which are numbness, aching or tingling sensation of hands and feet. These adverse effects are prevented with vitamin B6-supplements.

Use of alcohol during TB treatment increases the risk of hepatitis. For this reason, it is important, that you do not drink alcohol at all during the treatment.