

## Drug Information: Rifampin

URL of this page: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/medmaster/a682403.html>

(rif' am pin)

### Why is this medication prescribed?

Rifampin eliminates bacteria that cause tuberculosis (TB). It is generally used with other drugs to treat tuberculosis or to eliminate *Neisseria meningitidis* (a bacteria) and to prevent you from giving these infections to others. However, rifampin is not used to treat *Neisseria meningitidis* infection.

This medication is sometimes prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

### How should this medicine be used?

Rifampin comes as a capsule to take by mouth. It usually is taken once a day. You will probably be taking it for at least 3 months and possibly for up to 2 years. Rifampin works best on an empty stomach; take it 1 hour before or at least 2 hours after a meal. If you have difficulty swallowing the capsule, you may empty its contents into applesauce or jelly. Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Take rifampin exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

### What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking rifampin,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to rifampin or any other drugs.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially anticoagulants ('blood thinners') such as warfarin (Coumadin), cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune), estrogen, hydrocortisone (Hydrocortone), medications for heart disease or diabetes, methadone, prednisone (Deltasone), theophylline (Theo-Dur), verapamil (Calan, Isoptin), and vitamins. Rifampin alters the effectiveness of oral contraceptives; use another method of birth control while taking this medication. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had liver disease.
- tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while taking rifampin, call your doctor.
- you should know that this drug may make you drowsy. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this drug affects you.
- remember that alcohol can add to the drowsiness caused by this drug.

### What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

### **What side effects can this medication cause?**

Rifampin may cause side effects. Your urine, stools, saliva, sputum, sweat, and tears may turn red-orange; this effect is harmless. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- headache
- muscle pain
- bone pain
- heartburn
- upset stomach
- vomiting
- stomach cramps
- chills
- diarrhea

If you experience any of the following symptoms, call your doctor immediately:

- skin rash (hives)
- sores on skin or in the mouth
- fever
- yellowing of the skin or eyes

If you experience a serious side effect, you or your doctor may send a report to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program online [at <http://www.fda.gov/MedWatch/index.html>] or by phone [1-800-332-1088].

### **What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?**

Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

### **In case of emergency/overdose**

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911.

### **What other information should I know?**

Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory. Your doctor will order certain lab tests to check your response to rifampin.

Do not let anyone else take your medication. Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription.

It is important for you to keep a written list of all of the prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines you are taking, as well as any products such as vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements. You should bring this list with you each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. It is also important information to carry with you in case of emergencies.

**Brand name(s):**

- Rifadin®
- Rimactane®

**Brand name(s) of combination products:**

- Rifamate® containing Rifampin and Isoniazid
- Rifater® containing Rifampin, Isoniazid, and Pyrazinamide

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