

Package leaflet Information for the user

Folinic Acid (as Calcium Folate) 7.5 mg/ml Solution for Injection calcium folinate

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start using this medicine because it contains important information for you.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you only. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them even if their signs of illness are the same as yours.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

What is in this leaflet:

1. What Folinic Acid Solution for Injection is and what it is used for
2. What you need to know before you use Folinic Acid Solution for Injection
3. How to use Folinic Acid Solution for Injection
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store Folinic Acid Solution for Injection
6. Contents of the pack and other information

1. What Folinic Acid solution for injection is and what it is used for

Folinic acid is one of the B group of vitamins.

Folinic Acid Solution for Injection is used to reduce the side effects of other medicines (a group of medicines called folic acid antagonists). Examples of folic acid antagonists are:

- methotrexate (a medicine often used to treat cancer)
- trimetrexate (an antibiotic and anti-cancer medicine)
- trimethoprim (an antibiotic)
- pyrimethamine (a medicine often used to treat malaria)

It may also be used to treat an overdose of these medicines.

Folinic Acid Solution for Injection may also be used to increase the effectiveness of the anti-cancer medicine fluorouracil.

You must talk to a doctor if you do not feel better or if you feel worse.

2. What you need to know before you use Folinic Acid Solution for Injection

Folinic Acid Solution for Injection must not be injected intrathecally (into the spine).

Do not use Folinic Acid Solution for Injection

- if you are allergic to folinic acid or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6)
- if you have a type of anaemia caused by too little vitamin B₁₂

Tell your doctor if either of the above applies to you before this medicine is used.

Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before taking Folinic Acid Solution for Injection.

Use of Folinic Acid Solution for Injection with fluorouracil

You should not start to use this medicine together with fluorouracil if you have noticed that your medicine is causing problems to your stomach and gut.

Take special care with Folinic Acid Solution for Injection if:

- your kidneys do not work properly – you may need to take a higher dose or need to take this medicine for longer
- if you have epilepsy

If you are to receive folinic acid and fluorouracil treatment at the same time take special care if:

- you have had radiotherapy
- you have stomach or bowel trouble, diarrhoea
- you have an inflammation on the inside of your mouth
- you are elderly
- you feel very weak

Tell your doctor if the above applies to you before this medicine is used.

Other medicines and Folinic Acid

Tell your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines.

Special care is needed if you are taking/using other medicines as some could interact with Folinic Acid Solution for Injection, for example:

- Calcium folinate may sometimes be given at the same time as a medicine known as a folic acid antagonist, examples are co-trimoxazole, methotrexate and pyrimethamine. When this happens the effect of the folic acid antagonist may be reduced or minimised altogether
- fluorouracil (anti-cancer medicine) – the effectiveness and side effects of this medicine will be increased by folinic acid
- medicines used to treat epilepsy (phenobarbitone, phenytoin, primidone or succinimides) – the effectiveness of these medicines may be reduced by calcium folinate. Your doctor may check blood levels of these medicines and change your dose to prevent increased convulsions (fits)
- DNA synthesis inhibitors (anti-cancer medicines such as hydroxycarbamide, cytarabine, mecaptopurine and thioguanine)
- The effectiveness of folinic acid can be reduced by chloramphenicol (an antibiotic).

Your doctor will monitor how well your kidneys are working and will take regular blood tests to check this.

Pregnancy, breast-feeding and fertility

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking this medicine.

It is unlikely that your doctor will ask you to take/use a folic acid antagonist or fluorouracil whilst you are pregnant or breast-feeding. However, if you have taken/used a folic acid antagonist whilst pregnant or breast-feeding, this medicine (folic acid) may be used to reduce its side effects.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking any medicine.

Driving and using machines

There is no evidence that calcium folinate has any effect on the ability to drive or use machines.

Folic Acid Solution for Injection contains Sodium

Folic Acid 7.5 mg/ml injection solution contains 6.8 mg sodium (main component of cooking/table salt) in each 2 ml ampoule. This is equivalent to 0.3% of the recommended maximum daily dietary intake of sodium for an adult.

3. How to use Folic Acid Solution for Injection

This medicine may be given by injection (using a syringe) into muscle. Alternatively it may be given by injection or infusion (drip) into a vein. If it is given by infusion Folic Acid Solution for Injection will be diluted first.

Recommended Dose

Your doctor will work out the correct dose of Folic Acid Solution for Injection for you and how often it must be given. It will depend upon the medical condition which is being treated.

If you use more Folic Acid Solution for Injection than you should

This medicine will be given to you in a hospital, under the supervision of a doctor. It is unlikely that you will be given too much or too little, however, tell your doctor or nurse if you have any concerns.

If you forget to use Folic acid Solution for Injection

Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

4. Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Very rare: may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people

- severe allergic reaction - you may experience a sudden itchy rash (hives), swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, face, lips, mouth or throat (which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing), and you may feel you are going to faint. This is a serious side effect. You may need urgent medical attention.

Uncommon: may affect up to 1 in 100 people

- fever

Rare: may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people

- an increase in convulsions (fits) in patients with epilepsy
- depression
- agitation
- problems with the digestive system

- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)

Not known: frequency cannot be estimated from the available data

- stomach pain

Combination therapy with 5-fluorouracil only:

If you receive calcium folinate in combination with an anticancer medicine containing fluoropyrimidines, it is more likely that you experience the following side effects of this other medicine:

Very common: may affect more than 1 in 10 people

- nausea
- vomiting
- severe diarrhoea
- drying out which may be due to diarrhoea
- inflammation of the lining of the intestine and mouth (life-threatening conditions have occurred)
- reduction in the number of blood cells (including life-threatening conditions)

Common: may affect up to 1 in 10 people

- redness and swelling of the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet which may cause the skin to peel (hand-foot syndrome)

Not known: frequency cannot be estimated from the available data

- elevated ammonia level in the blood

Tell your doctor if you experience diarrhoea or an inflammation of the lining of the mouth, as your doctor might wish to decrease the dose of fluorouracil until symptoms have fully disappeared.

Because diarrhoea may be a sign of toxicity to the stomach and gut, if you show these symptoms, you will be carefully monitored until the symptoms have disappeared completely. These symptoms may be the start of a rapid deterioration leading to death.

Your doctor may do tests to check for low levels of calcium in your blood.

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via HPRÁ Pharmacovigilance. Website: www.hpra.ie.

By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store Folinic Acid Solution for Injection

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Expiry

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the ampoule and carton after 'EXP'. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help to protect the environment.

Storage

Store in a refrigerator (+2°C to +8°C). Keep ampoules in the outer carton in order to protect from light.

Visible signs of deterioration

Only clear, pale yellow solutions should be used. If cloudy in appearance or particles can be seen, the solution should be discarded.

6. Contents of the pack and other information**What Folinic Acid Solution for Injection contains**

The active substance is folinic acid. Each millilitre (ml) of solution contains 7.5 milligrams (mg) of folinic acid in the form of calcium folinate.

Each 1 mg of folinic acid is equivalent to 1.08 mg of calcium folinate.

The other ingredients are sodium chloride, water for injections, sodium hydroxide and hydrochloric acid. See section 2 **Folinic Acid Solution for Injection contains Sodium** for further information about the sodium content.

What Folinic Acid Solution for Injection looks like and contents of the pack

Folinic Acid Solution for Injection is a clear, pale yellow solution for injection which comes in glass containers called ampoules.

It is supplied in packs containing 5 x 15 mg/2 ml ampoules.

Marketing authorisation holder

Pfizer Healthcare Ireland
9 Riverwalk
National Digital Park
Citywest Business Campus
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Manufacturer

Pfizer Service Company BVBA, Hoge Wei 10, 1930 Zaventem, Belgium

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Folinic Acid (as Calcium Folate) 7.5 mg/ml Solution for Injection**The following information is intended for medical or healthcare professionals only**

Further to the information included in section 3, practical information on the preparation/handling of the medicinal product is provided here.

Incompatibilities

Incompatibilities have been reported between injectable forms of calcium folinate and injectable forms of droperidol, fluorouracil, foscarnet and methotrexate.

Droperidol

1. Droperidol 1.25 mg/0.5 ml with folinic acid 5 mg/0.5 ml, immediate precipitation in direct admixture in syringe for 5 minutes at 25° C followed by 8 minutes of centrifugation.
2. Droperidol 2.5 mg/0.5 ml with folinic acid 10 mg/0.5 ml, immediate precipitation when the drugs were injected sequentially into a Y-site without flushing the Y-side arm between injections.

Fluorouracil

Folinic acid must not be mixed in the same infusion as 5-fluorouracil because a precipitate may form. Fluorouracil 50 mg/ml with folinic acid 20 mg/ml, with or without dextrose 5% in water, has been shown to be incompatible when mixed in different amounts and stored at 4°C, 23°C, or 32° C in polyvinyl chloride containers.

Foscarnet

Foscarnet 24 mg/ml with folinic acid 20 mg/ml; formation of a cloudy yellow solution reported.

Instructions for use and handling, and disposal

Folinic Acid Injection is intended only for single use. Any unused portion of the solution should be disposed of in accordance with the local requirements.

For intravenous infusion, Folinic Acid Solution for Injection may be diluted with 0.9 % sodium chloride or 5% glucose solution before use.

From a microbial point of view, the product should be used immediately. If not used immediately, in-use storage times and conditions prior to use are the responsibility of the user.

Prior to administration, Folinic Acid should be inspected visually. The solution for injection or infusion should be a clear and yellowish solution. If cloudy in appearance or particles are observed, the solution should be discarded.