

## CellCept

CellCept (Mycophenolate mofetil) was originally developed as an immune system suppressant to fight the chances of rejection in organ (kidney) transplant. Doctors recently have begun to prescribe CellCept for a number of other conditions, including MG. Remember, most of the more advanced medications for MG act by suppressing the immune system so that the patient has fewer MG antibodies and gains relief from the symptoms. It is believed that CellCept works fast and has fewer side effects than the other drugs in its class (cyclosporine and azathioprine being the main ones). CellCept is gaining wide use in treating difficult cases of MG.

### Basics of CellCept

CellCept (Mycophenolate mofetil) is a form of mycophenolic acid. It is often used in place of Imuran (azathioprine).

CellCept is a selective, reversible noncompetitive inhibitor of inosine monophosphate dehydrogenase. It inhibits DNA/RNA synthesis which effectively reduces the production of some types of white blood cells. It makes it harder for your body to produce antibodies, including the MG antibodies which are interfering with your ability to function.

### Main Side Effects

General: Abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation, nausea/vomiting, peripheral edema, hematuria- blood in your urine, acne, dyspnea and cough.

Suppression of the immune system makes patients more susceptible to certain types of infections:

- Bacterial: wound, pneumonia, UTI, etc.
- Viral: i.e. CMV
- Fungal: i.e. Candida

Other: headache, back pain, chest pain, insomnia, dizziness, and tremor. Suppression of RNA/DNA syntheses anemia, leucopenia, thrombocytopenia, leukocytosis

### Drug Interactions

CellCept is a powerful immune suppressant; as such it should be treated with respect and not caution. Always inform your doctors of being on CellCept before taking any prescription drug. Consult the MG doctor for guidance before taking over the counter medications.

**Antacids** and oral **Magnesium** interfere with CellCept's assimilation and should not be taken at the same time. Separate intake by 2-3 hours. Cholestyramine also interferes with the bioavailability of the drug.

**Pregnancy Risk:** Pt. should use contraceptives due to Potential risks to a fetus.

### Lab Protocol

- CBC weekly times 1 month
- CBC 2 times per month 2<sup>nd</sup>. & 3<sup>rd</sup>. month
- Monthly thereafter

Reviewed for publication by the Medical Advisory Board of the Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania. 2009