

# RIFAMPICIN

**Other names:** Rifadin®  
Rifinah® (rifampicin in combination with isoniazid)



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medicine

Rifampicin is an antibiotic used to treat or prevent certain serious bacterial infections, such as some skin conditions, bone infections and tuberculosis (TB). It is usually prescribed as one of a number of medicines to treat the infection.

Rifampicin can also be used to prevent the spread of infection by treating the carriers of the infection e.g. pneumonia and bacterial meningitis.

Rifampicin works by inhibiting the bacteria and preventing the infection from spreading which allows healing to take place.

## When to take this medicine

Take rifampicin exactly as directed by your doctor, usually once or twice a day. Rifampicin is best taken on an empty stomach, which is at least ONE hour before food or TWO hours after food or antacids. Swallow tablets (Rifinah) whole with a glass of water.

Try to take your doses at about the same time each day, as this will help you remember to take them.

You must complete the course of rifampicin (unless your doctor tells you otherwise), or your infection may come back.

## If you miss a dose

Take it as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- diarrhoea
- muscle weakness or pain in the muscles or joints
- severe rash

- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of your legs or ankles
- flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, headache, dizziness)
- flushing or itchy skin with or without a rash

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- headache
- tiredness, feeling weak
- stomach upsets such as nausea and/or vomiting
- reddish discolouration of your tears, saliva, sweat and urine (this will resolve when you finish your course of rifampicin)
- loss of appetite
- yellow appearance of skin or eyes

Rifampicin can stain soft contact lenses a red-orange colour. If you usually wear contact lenses, when treated with this medicine you should wear glasses instead.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect is of a concern to you.

## Other Medication

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Rifampicin can interact with a large number of medicines and reduce the effectiveness of them. Such as:

- antibiotics (e.g. doxycycline)
- anticoagulants (e.g. warfarin)
- anticonvulsants (e.g. phenytoin)
- antidepressants (e.g. amitriptyline, nortriptyline)
- diabetic medicines - hypoglycaemics - (e.g. glipizide, gliclazide)

This is not a complete list. Check with your doctor or pharmacist for any possible interactions and what to do, for example, if you are taking a diabetic medicine you may need to regularly monitor your blood glucose levels.

If taking a combined oral contraceptive, it is recommended to use other birth control measures while on this medicine and for at least four weeks after stopping the rifampicin.

## Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**