

DRUG SAFETY UPDATE – PATIENT INFORMATION

Nitrofurantoin

Nitrofurantoin is an effective antibiotic used to prevent and treat infections of the bladder, kidney, and other parts of the urinary tract, but it has been linked to side effects affecting the lungs and liver^[1]

If you are taking nitrofurantoin, seek medical advice **immediately** if you experience any of the following symptoms as **these may be symptoms of a side effect affecting the lungs**^[1]

- trouble breathing
- shortness of breath
- a lingering cough,
- coughing up blood or mucus
- pain or discomfort when breathing

Talk to your doctor or another healthcare professional if you develop any of the following as **these may be symptoms of a side effect affecting the liver**^[1]

- yellowing of the skin or eyes,
- upper right abdominal pain,
- dark urine and pale or grey-coloured stools,
- itching or joint pain and swelling.

You should also seek advice for any of the following:

- Fever (body temperature 38°C or higher)
- pain, tingling or loss of feeling in the feet
- loss of balance or weakness
- a cut or ulcer on your foot that isn't getting better
- your eye sight gets worse
- eye pain (particularly on moving the eye)
- not being able to see colours as well as before



If you are using Nitrofurantoin in the long term:

Your treatment will be reviewed by your GP at least every 6 months. This is to ensure that the treatment is working for you and that it is still appropriate for you to continue.

In order to check that your medicine is not causing any problems your GP will ask you to attend blood tests when you start treatment and then every 3-6 months to check how well your kidneys and liver are working.

Be alert to the potential adverse drug reactions and vigilant for the signs and symptoms that may need further investigation.

References:

1. Nitrofurantoin: reminder of the risks of pulmonary and hepatic adverse drug reactions
2. EKPG Long-term nitrofurantoin safety guidance for patients.
3. With thanks for Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust for the production of the original version of this document.