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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

L-methylfolate

Deplin / Medical-food and supplement formulations

A guide for adults taking l-methylfolate.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

AN ADD-ON, NOT A REPLACEMENT

CHECK THE EXACT FORMULATION AND DOSE

Formulations: Prescription medical-food and over-the-counter supplement formulations differ in dose and ingredients. Milligrams and micrograms are not interchangeable.

What it is used for

L-methylfolate is sometimes added to antidepressant treatment when depression has not improved enough. Certain formulations are marketed as medical foods. That designation does not mean they have FDA approval as antidepressant drugs.

How it works

It is a usable form of folate involved in pathways that support production of several brain messengers. A plausible biochemical role does not guarantee that a particular person will benefit.

What to expect over time

Review mood and daily functioning over several weeks. Improving a blood folate result alone does not establish that depression is improving.

Taking your medication

- Use the exact formulation and dose recommended. Check all vitamins to avoid unintended duplication.
- Take consistently according to the label.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- Do not replace an antidepressant or prenatal folic acid with high-dose methylfolate on your own.

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L-METHYLFOLATE / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Stomach upset or other gastrointestinal symptoms
- Sleep difficulty, anxiety, or agitation in some people
- Allergic reactions to an ingredient

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Discuss whether folate or vitamin B12 testing is needed. High folate intake can obscure blood findings of B12 deficiency while nerve injury continues. Report new numbness, weakness, or balance problems.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Discuss bipolar symptoms, anemia, vitamin B12 deficiency, absorption problems, seizures, and cancer treatment.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Methotrexate and other medicines affecting folate require a coordinated plan with the treating specialist. Do not change prescribed folate support yourself.

Review antiseizure medicines and every vitamin or supplement, including prenatal formulations.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for trouble breathing, swelling of the face or throat, a seizure, or collapse.

Prompt medical advice. Report a major change in energy or behavior, especially little need for sleep, unusual impulsivity, or agitation.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Does an MTHFR variant mean I cannot use folic acid?
No. Common MTHFR variants do not prevent the body from processing folic acid. A genetic result alone does not establish a need for high-dose methylfolate.

Is more always better?
No. Match the formulation to the treatment goal and evaluate whether it helps.

Everyday tips

Bring supplement containers or clear label photos to appointments.

Track depression symptoms alongside the rest of your treatment plan.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

Official prescribing information: l-methylfolate
Official prescribing information: l-methylfolate

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.