

DAPSONE PATIENT INFORMATION

Dapsone is an oral medication that is a safe and effective treatment for many different skin conditions. These diseases are all related to the excess activity of a certain type of white blood cell called a neutrophil. With these skin problems, there is an excess activation of these types of white blood cells. Dapsone works by preventing this over-activation.

The original use for Dapsone was for the treatment of leprosy in the 1940s; therefore, it is often classified as an anti-leprosy drug. It is no longer used for the treatment of leprosy but for its anti-inflammatory effects. This anti-inflammatory effect prevents the action of the overstimulated white blood cells in various conditions.

Dapsone is often a treatment option for patients when the standard treatments have not been successful or there have been side effects. Before starting Dapsone, you need to be checked for the level for a normal enzyme called glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase. Patients who have a deficiency of this enzyme can have an excess breakdown of red blood cells when taking Dapsone. This is the reason why a blood test is done before you start the medication. In addition, during the course of your treatment, blood counts and blood chemistries will be checked periodically.

Dapsone is a medication that is usually very well tolerated. Like all drugs, there are potential serious side effects. Most patients who take Dapsone do not have any problems but occasionally it can produce an upset stomach, diarrhea, headache, muscle cramps and skin rashes. Rarely, Dapsone can cause numbness and tingling in the hands and feet.

In almost all patients, Dapsone causes a slight decrease in the number of red blood cells, which is closely monitored. This is the reason why the dosage of Dapsone is slowly increased. You should also contact my office if you develop a fever, skin rash, yellowing of the skin or eyes or any unusual bruising when you are on this medication.

Dapsone is a sulfone-derived medication so patients with certain types of allergic reactions to sulfa-based products may not be able to take this. If you have any such problems, let me know before starting.

Dapsone does not interact with many other medications. The absorption can be decreased if you take it together with heartburn medications such as antacids, Pepcid, and Zantac. You can take Dapsone with these medications but it should be taken at least 2 hours apart.

In summary, Dapsone is a medication that often works very well for certain types of skin conditions. If you have any other questions, please ask me before you leave the office.