

# **Bactrim**

## **(sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim)**

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Bactrim is an oral antibiotic used for both its antibacterial and its anti-inflammatory properties. It is used very commonly for skin infections, and it is also used to treat acne and occasionally rosacea.

### **Overview:**

- Bactrim is a sulfa-based antibiotic. **If you know you are allergic to sulfa, you should not take it.**
- **The major potential adverse effect from Bactrim is a rash.** If this occurs it is usually in the first month of therapy. In most cases it is mild and resolves within a few days of stopping the medication. In rare cases it may cause a severe rash called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, which can result in hospitalization. This is rare, but it is impossible to predict who will get it. If you get a new rash while taking the medication (especially in the first month), stop taking it and call our office.
- Bactrim may also, rarely, cause liver irritation and lower blood cell counts. In our patients who take this medication for more than a couple months **we order blood tests periodically to monitor this.**
- **Bactrim should not be taken if you are pregnant or breast feeding.** If you think you might be pregnant, stop taking it immediately, and contact our office.
- **Birth control pills.** In the past it was considered that taking oral antibiotics with birth control pills slightly increased the risk of getting pregnant. More recent studies do not support this.
- **Avoid prolonged sun exposure,** and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen if sun exposure is likely. Most people who take Bactrim do not notice sun sensitivity, but a small percentage will.
- **Bactrim may be taken with or without food.**

### **Common side effects:**

- Vaginal yeast infections. (Eating yogurt or taking probiotics may reduce this risk.)
- Increased sensitivity to sunlight **and tanning beds** may cause you to sunburn more easily.

### **Occasional side effects:**

Rash.

### **Extremely rare complications:**

As with any medication there can be rare, serious reactions: allergic reaction, liver inflammation, blood cell abnormalities, Stevens-Johnson Syndrome described above.

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