

Carbimazole/Propylthiouracil (PTU) warning

Department of Endocrinology

To the patient:

Warning: please read this now.

Carbimazole/PTU treatment and sore mouth I throat.

You have been started on carbimazole treatment for an overactive thyroid. This is a very safe treatment that has been used for over 50 years.

However, very rarely, a patient reacts to the drug with a sudden loss of white blood cells ('neutrophils') from the blood.

This puts he/she at very high risk from infections and the drug **MUST BE STOPPED IMMEDIATELY**. The first sign of this happening is **A SEVERE SORE MOUTH OR THROAT FOR NO OBVIOUS REASON**.

If you suspect this may have happened:

1. Do **NOT** take any more doses of the tablet.
2. Contact an emergency doctor or a casualty department

THE SAME DAY (even if it is a weekend) and show him this letter and I or the tablets.

To the doctor:

This patient is on **CARBIMAZOLE** or **PTU**. If he/she has a sore throat or mouth it may indicate agranulocytosis, a very rare side effect.

Please:

1. Stop carbimazole/PTU immediately.
2. Check neutrophil count urgently, **NOT** just the total white cell count (which may be normal). If the neutrophil count is < 1.0 do **NOT** recommence treatment and admit patient for neutropaenia. If the neutrophil count is $1.0 - 2.0$, measure it again the next day off treatment. If it is >2.0 , it is safe to continue treatment.
3. Carbimazole/PTU and thyrotoxicosis also cause a mild reduction in white cell count which is of no significance. A skin rash on carbimazole/PTU is also common and does not indicate neutropaenia.

Department of Endocrinology

Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton
Telephone: 01273 696955

Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath
Telephone: 01444 441881

There is a link to a short video about thyroid treatment on our website, www.bsuh.nhs.uk/services/diabetes-and-endocrinology/

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Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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