

## **METHOTREXATE**

### **What are the aims of this leaflet?**

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about methotrexate. It tells you what it is, how it works, how it is used to treat skin conditions, and where you can find out more about it.

### **What is methotrexate and how does it work?**

Methotrexate is a drug that acts to slow the proliferation of cells. It was used first, in high doses, to treat cancer, but was found to be an effective treatment for skin and joint diseases at much lower doses than those used for treating cancer. Methotrexate can reduce inflammation and can also affect the immune system (the body's own defence system). One of its actions is to reduce the activity of the immune system, so it is always used with care.

### **Which skin conditions are treated with methotrexate?**

Methotrexate is used to treat psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and several other types of skin problem including: pemphigoid, pemphigus, sarcoidosis, scleroderma, dermatomyositis and eczema.

### **How long will I need to take methotrexate before it has an effect?**

Methotrexate does not work immediately. It may be 3-12 weeks before you notice any benefit.

### **When should I take methotrexate?**

Methotrexate is usually taken in tablet form **ONCE A WEEK**, on the same day each week. The tablets should be swallowed whole and not crushed or chewed. Methotrexate may also be given once a week by injection - either subcutaneous (an injection under the skin, like insulin injections for diabetes), or intramuscular (in the buttocks or thigh).