

Propylthiouracil in thyrotoxicosis

This medicine is available as a tablet containing Propylthiouracil 50 mg.

How does it work?

Propylthiouracil acts on the thyroid to reduce overactivity.

How do I take it?

Treatment is started at high dosage often 300-600mg per day taken as 2-3 divided dosages and is maintained until your thyroid returns to normal activity. The dosage is then gradually decreased so as to maintain normal thyroid activity. This maintenance dosage can vary from patient to patient but is often in the range of 50-150mg per day which may be taken as a single daily dosage. Therapy is usually continued for 18-24 months.

What side effects can be expected?

Side effects are rare but if they occur are usually seen in the first eight weeks of treatment:

- Headaches, nausea, joint pains, stomach upset.
- Skin rashes.
- Rarely alopecia, hepatitis, vasculitis and lupus erythematosus-like syndrome.
- A rare side effect is bone marrow depression which can present in 1 in 1000 patients. This presents as a severe sore throat, mouth ulcers, fever. If any of these symptoms occur stop the drug and contact your doctor immediately for a blood count test. The suppression of the bone marrow is often temporary with the bone marrow recovering after 1-2 week.

Propylthiouracil during pregnancy and lactation

Propylthiouracil is used in pregnancy but we will aim to use the lowest dosage possible. Propylthiouracil does enter mother's milk in small amounts but this does not preclude breastfeeding. We will use the lowest effective dose of PTU.

More information is available on the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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