



N-acetylcysteine (NAC)

Information for Interstitial Lung Disease Clinic Patients

UHN

What is the name of the medicine my doctor has prescribed?

Generic Name	Brand Name
N-acetyl cysteine (N uh-seet-l-sis-tee-een)	Airbron™, Mucomyst™, Parvolex™ and PharmaNAC™

Why is this medication being recommended for me?

N-acetylcysteine is in a class of drugs called “antioxidants.”

Antioxidants may reduce the amount of damage caused by inflammation or active damage in your lungs. Inflammation can lead to fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs.

By reducing the damage caused by inflammation, it is hoped that N-acetylcysteine will limit the progression of lung fibrosis and allow the inflamed lung to return to normal.

N-acetylcysteine is not a prescription drug and is sold over the counter at many pharmacies and health food stores. It is not known if there are differences between different preparations of NAC.

What dose should I take?

We recommend that you take N-acetylcysteine 500mg or 600mg by mouth three times every day.

What special precautions should I follow when on N-acetylcysteine?

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to N-acetylcysteine or any other medications.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.

Please visit the UHN Patient Education website for more health information:

www.uhnpatienteducation.ca

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What side effects can this medication cause?

N-acetylcysteine may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms, if they are severe or do not go away:

- Upset stomach
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Fever

What monitoring will I need?

There is no routine monitoring needed for people taking N-acetylcysteine.

Is there any proven benefit to taking this medicine?

A recent study that showed some benefit of taking N-acetylcysteine combined with Prednisone and Azathioprine compared with Prednisone and Azathioprine alone in patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF).

(Reference: [*New England Journal of Medicine*](#), 2005 Nov 24;353(21):2229-42)

A study comparing N-acetylcysteine therapy alone to placebo or a combination of immunosuppressive medications is ongoing. (ClinicalTrials.gov #NCT00650091)

This site does not provide medical advice.

These sheets are developed by the UHN Pharmacy Department. They are provided for informational purposes only. These sheets are meant to supplement a discussion with the pharmacist. Please contact a pharmacist or other health care professionals if you have any further questions regarding this medication.