FAIRVIEW PHARMACY — EST. 1978

Taking cephalexin safely

cephalexin · cephalosporin antibiotic · also sold as Keflex

3 MISTAKES TO AVOID

1 Stopping early
Antibiotics work best when you take every dose for the full time prescribed.

2 Overthinking how to take it
With or without food is fine. Keep the liquid form refrigerated and discard after 14 days.

3 Not telling us everything
A penicillin allergy can cross-react; probenecid, metformin, and kidney problems all need attention.

How to take it

- **Take every dose**, on schedule, for the full time your provider prescribed, even once you feel well.
- **With or without food** — either is fine. Take it at evenly spaced times.
- **Liquid form:** shake well before every dose, keep it refrigerated, and discard it **14 days** after it's mixed.

Tell your pharmacist before you start (mistake #3)

- **Penicillin allergy?** Say so. Cross-reactions with cephalosporins like cephalexin can happen in up to 1 in 10 people with a penicillin allergy.
- **Probenecid:** not recommended with it. **Metformin:** cephalexin can raise your levels; your provider may need to adjust your metformin dose.
- **Kidney problems?** Tell your pharmacist — your dose may need to be lower, since high levels can raise the risk of seizures.
- Show us your full medicine list.

IMPORTANT
Mild nausea or upset stomach can happen and usually passes. But watery or bloody diarrhea, even weeks after you finish, can be a serious gut infection called C diff — call your provider.

Call your doctor right away if you notice

- A new rash, hives, mouth sores, or any other sign of an allergy

EMERGENCY: CALL 911
Trouble breathing, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat, or a severe blistering or peeling rash: stop cephalexin and get medical help right away.

Good to know

Cephalexin only treats infections caused by bacteria, not colds or the flu. Taking it exactly as directed helps keep it working.

Questions? Ask Dr. Mike at fairviewpharm.com/medications

Leave a message: 601-640-4671 · 500 Katie Ave, Hattiesburg, MS

Medically reviewed by Dr. Mike Acheampong, Pharmacist, Fairview Pharmacy · October 2026

This handout is for education only and is not medical advice. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your medicines.
Source: FDA prescribing information for CEPHALEXIN capsules and oral suspension (Teva, rev. 8/2026). Brand names are trademarks of their owners.

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