

Patient Information

## Renal Services

# Cyclophosphamide

Cyclophosphamide is a drug which controls some kidney disease by suppressing the bone marrow

### About your medicine

Cyclophosphamide is a form of chemotherapy and can be used as a treatment for myeloma or vasculitis.

Vasculitis causing renal failure can be due to different conditions (see our vasculitis leaflet).

Cyclophosphamide is used to try and improve kidney function and to dampen down vasculitis, stopping it from causing any further damage to the body.

It is often given in high doses to start with followed by a smaller daily dose. Cyclophosphamide for myeloma can be taken as a larger dose once a week or a smaller dose once a day. Your doctor will decide which is better for you.

**Contraception should be used whilst taking Cyclophosphamide and for three months afterwards because it is a harmful drug for unborn babies.**

You should **not** be vaccinated with some vaccines whilst receiving Cyclophosphamide (see the information sheet on vaccines).

### Taking your medicine

Cyclophosphamide tablets should be swallowed whole, not chewed or crushed. Ideally they should be taken with a full glass of water, you should check with your doctor about increasing your fluid intake. If you are taking high dose Cyclophosphamide with another tablet called Mesna (see below), the Mesna tablets can be broken in half or taken



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whole to get the dose needed.

### Side effects

Like all medicines Cyclophosphamide can cause side effects.

- With higher doses, feeling sick is common but this is reduced by a tablet called Ondansetron which is taken one hour before your first dose of Cyclophosphamide.
- Cyclophosphamide can cause inflammation of the bladder so, with higher doses, you will be given a tablet called mesna which will protect your bladder.
- Hair loss can occur during treatment. It is more likely with the higher dose Cyclophosphamide; smaller daily doses are less likely to cause a problem. Hair growth comes back again after finishing treatment and often comes back whilst remaining on low doses daily.
- Cyclophosphamide can also cause a decrease in "white blood cells"; your doctor will check your blood regularly to make sure this does not occur.
- Cyclophosphamide can cause a small decrease in fertility (less able to have a baby).
- You are at higher risk of developing skin or cervical cancer. Due to this we recommend you see your GP for regular skin checks and that women attend for their cervical smear. If detected early, treatment is more effective.
- You are more likely to develop infections whilst taking Cyclophosphamide and any infections may be worse than normal. You should report any signs of infection to your GP.

### Storing and taking your medicine

Store the tablets in their original packet in a cool, dry place out of the reach of children. Only remove the tablets from the container when it is time to take them.

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**Cyclophosphamide is a type of oral chemotherapy tablet that can also be used to treat other conditions, such as certain types of cancer. With any chemotherapy tablet there are some safety precautions that you should follow, so please read the advice below.**

- Take special care when preparing to take your tablets not to confuse them with any other tablets.
- Never allow anybody else to take your tablets.
- Please use a non-touch technique where possible when taking your tablets. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist can show you how to do this. If you are unable to do this, avoid touching the drug as much as possible and wash your hands afterwards.
- If someone else is giving you Cyclophosphamide tablets they should wear hospital gloves when handling the drugs to protect themselves. Please ask nursing staff for these if required.
- If you have Cyclophosphamide tablets left at the end of your treatment please return to the hospital pharmacy for safe disposal and do not dispose of them in the toilet or via Council rubbish collections.
- If you forget to take your Cyclophosphamide tablets, do not take double the dose. If you are on a daily dose of Cyclophosphamide you can take your next dose at the usual time.
- Do not crush/break/dissolve your Cyclophosphamide tablets unless advised to do so at the time they are prescribed for you.

If you have any further queries or concerns, contact the Renal Unit on 024 7696 7777

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact us on 024 7696 7777 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

### Document History

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