

Renal Services

Ciclosporin: Information for kidney transplant patients

What is it used for?

Ciclosporin (available as several brands, also known as Neoral™) is an immunosuppressant drug that helps to prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney. At UHCW you will be prescribed the Neoral™ brand.

How does it work?

It works by stopping the body's production of cells that make up part of your immune system. This dampens down your immune system to stop rejection of your new kidney.

How do I take it?

You will take your ciclosporin dose twice a day (every 12 hours), preferably on an empty stomach, as food can affect how well your body absorbs the drug. It is also important to avoid eating grapefruit while taking ciclosporin, as this can prevent your medication from being absorbed and working properly. Ciclosporin is available in 25mg, 50mg and 100mg capsules and 100mg/1ml solution. You will need to have regular blood tests to make sure that the levels of drug in your blood are within the correct range. Your doctor will decide on the right dose for you depending on these results and your other medication, so you may find other people taking bigger or smaller doses than you.

Are there any side effects?

- You might experience a “tingly” sensation or the “shakes”
- You may have an upset stomach (sickness or indigestion)
- You may notice your hair getting thicker or an increase in hair growth
- You may experience headaches or hot flushes
- You may start to notice an over growth of your gums (gingival hyperplasia)
- You may also notice your blood pressure has increased when it is measured in clinic



Patient Information

Is there anything else I need to know?

Taking immunosuppressant medicines may mean you experience some long term effects on your health that you need to be aware of. These include an increased risk of infection and an increased risk of cancer. You should follow all the general health advice given to you by the transplant team. Please read the booklet they give you carefully, as this will provide you with more information.

Whilst you are an inpatient on the ward, we will take blood tests to check that you are taking the right amount of ciclosporin. This blood test will be taken just before your morning dose.

Once you are discharged, on the days you come to clinic please bring your morning dose with you and the transplant team will advise you when to take it. This will either be just after your blood test, or 2 hours before your blood test. This is because a “2 hour” level can give us a better idea of whether you are on the right dose.

You should not be vaccinated with certain ‘live’ vaccines whilst you are on ciclosporin. The transplant team or pharmacist will be able to advise you on vaccines that are okay for you to have.

Some common drugs, for example some antibiotics, can interfere with your ciclosporin levels, so it is important to let your GP, pharmacist or any other doctor that looks after you know that you are taking ciclosporin. If in doubt whether any other medication is okay to take, then always check with a member of the transplant team, or renal pharmacist.

Ciclosporin is available as different brands. You should make sure you **always receive** the **Neoral™** brand of ciclosporin and **do not switch** unless recommended by your transplant doctor.

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

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

Author	Amandeep Kaur
Department	Renal Services
Contact Tel	26785
Published	November 2012
Reviewed	November 2013, November 2015, June 2018
Review	June 2020
Version	4
Reference No	HIC/LFT/1527/12