

Cyclosporine



What is cyclosporine?

- An immunosuppressant that is used to control symptoms and prevent flare-ups in diseases of the immune system, such as glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys).
- Cyclosporine lowers your body's harmful response to diseases of the immune system by decreasing the production of lymphocytes, a type of white blood cells. It is often used with other medications such as prednisone.
- Available as oral gelatin capsules (10 mg, 25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg) and oral solution (100 mg/mL). The capsules should be swallowed whole. Do not crush or chew the capsules. Remove the capsule from the blister package just prior to use. Do not switch between brands.

How do I use it?

- Take the medication regularly twice daily.
- Space doses 12 hours apart for maximal effect.
- The medication can be taken with or without food, but always take it the same way each time.
- Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice with cyclosporine.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember if it is within six hours of your usual dosage time.
- If a dose is missed by more than six hours, skip it and go back to your normal schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose as

this may increase the side effects.

- Keep a diary of late or missed doses because the dose of cyclosporine is adjusted based on the level of drug in your body.
- It is very important to take each dose of cyclosporine because missing even a few doses may cause flare-ups of your symptoms.
- The dose of cyclosporine is based on your weight and is specific for your medical condition. Do not change your dose without talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

What side effects should I expect?

- Check your blood work regularly; this is important to detect and minimize the side effects of cyclosporine.
- The blood level of cyclosporine is checked at times to ensure the right amount of medication is in your body. If a cyclosporine level is requested, go to the laboratory in the morning on the day of the blood work at the time you would normally take your medication. Do not take your morning cyclosporine dose until blood work is done, and take the dose as soon as possible afterward.
- Common side effects include nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, loss of appetite, acne, hair growth, swollen gums, headache, tremors, tiredness or muscle cramps. Some side effects may decrease as your body gets used to the medication. If these symptoms continue or become bothersome, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Cyclosporine may worsen kidney function

and cause high blood pressure, electrolyte changes, high blood sugars or high cholesterols. Your blood work will be reviewed by your kidney care team.

- Cyclosporine may cause low red blood cells (anemia) and low platelets in the body. Contact your doctor if you notice any unusual tiredness, bleeding or easy bruising.
- Since cyclosporine lowers your body's ability to fight off infections, wash your hands often and stay away from people with infections, colds or flu. Contact your doctor right away if you feel you may have a cold or other infection, e.g. if you experience high fever, chills, very bad sore throat, chest congestion, pain with passing urine, etc.
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protect you from the sun.
- Cyclosporine may increase your chance of getting a type of cancer called lymphoma and other cancers. Contact your family doctor to ensure you have the recommended screening tests performed for people of your age and sex.

Drug interactions with cyclosporine

- Cyclosporine can interact with a large number of medications.
- You should discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medications (non prescription and prescription), herbal products or vitamins.
- Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can affect the absorption of cyclosporine, so do not eat any grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice while taking cyclosporine.
- Red wine may interact with cyclosporine and should be avoided.
- Do not receive any vaccines without talking to your doctor because the use

with cyclosporine may either increase your chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.

Is cyclosporine harmful during pregnancy?

- Cyclosporine readily crosses the placenta into the bloodstream of the fetus.
- The risk of cyclosporine use during pregnancy should be reviewed carefully by and discussed with your doctor (ideally before pregnancy).
- Cyclosporine is transferred into breast milk; therefore, breastfeeding is not recommended.

How do I store the medication?

- Store at room temperature away from moisture and sunlight. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep out of reach of children.

Reordering procedure

- To refill your medication, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.