

Cyclophosphamide

Rheumatology Department Patient Information Leaflet

Please keep this information in a safe place

What is cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is used in the treatment of various types of rheumatic disease including rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis.

Cyclophosphamide is a very powerful drug. It acts by reducing the activity of the immune system.

How is cyclophosphamide given?

Cyclophosphamide is given as an intravenous infusion (drip). The dose will depend upon your body weight. You will usually receive a course of six infusions. You may be given the first infusion as an inpatient on the rheumatology unit but for following infusions you will only have to be in hospital for the day. The frequency of infusions is usually every two to three weeks.

You will also be given a tablet called mesna which is given in three doses. The first dose is taken two hours before the infusion begins, the second dose is taken two hours after the infusion begins and the last dose is taken six hours after the infusion has begun. Mesna helps to prevent you from developing cystitis (irritation of the bladder) which is one of the possible side effects of the infusion.

How long will it take to work?

Cyclophosphamide does not work immediately. It may take six weeks or more before you start to notice an effect.

Do I need special tests?

You will need to have a blood test a few days before each infusion and 10 days after it. This is because cyclophosphamide can affect the immune system and certain blood cells, and so the blood test will check for this. Before each infusion your urine will also be checked.

It is your responsibility to have the blood tests. In order for us to receive the results from your blood tests, you will have to have them at any of the following centres:

Russells Hall Hospital:

Monday	8am to 7.30pm
Tuesday	5pm to 7.30pm
Wednesday	8am to 7.30pm
Thursday	12noon to 7.30pm
Friday	12noon to 7.30pm
Saturday	8am to 10am

No appointments required.

Corbett Outpatient Centre: Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. No appointments required.

Netherton Health Centre: Appointment required, ring 01384 366500.

Cross Street Health Centre: Appointment required, ring 01384 366257.

Ladies Walk Clinic: Appointment required, ring 01902 575103.

Will I have any side effects?

Some people have very few side effects, while others may experience more.

One of the most common side effects is nausea (feeling sick). It may start a few hours after the treatment is given and last for up to 24 hours. Your consultant can prescribe an anti-sickness drug to prevent or reduce nausea.

One important but very rare side effect is inflammation and bleeding of the bladder wall. If you notice blood in your urine, you must inform your consultant immediately. To reduce this happening, it is important that you drink plenty of fluids (at least eight to 10 glasses of water over the 24 hours of infusion). You will also be given mesna to try and reduce the risk of this happening.

Cyclophosphamide can affect certain blood cells in your blood which make it more likely for you to develop infections. If you develop an infection, have a high temperature or have unexplained bruising or bleeding, you must inform your consultant immediately.

Your mouth may become sore and you may develop mouth ulcers during your treatment with cyclophosphamide. Drinking plenty of fluids and cleaning your teeth regularly with a soft toothbrush can help prevent this from happening. If you are affected by this side effect, tell your nurse or consultant who can give you a special mouthwash to help to prevent or clear any mouth infections.

Other possible side effects include hair loss, irregular menstrual periods and loss of appetite. If you develop any of these symptoms after starting cyclophosphamide, you should inform your rheumatology nurse or doctor as soon as possible.

If you have not had chickenpox or shingles but come into contact with someone who has them, or if you develop chickenpox or shingles, you need to inform your consultant immediately. Chickenpox and shingles can be severe in people on cyclophosphamide because of a lowered immune system.

Can I take other medicine?

Cyclophosphamide is not a painkiller so you should continue taking your usual painkillers if you need them.

Some medicines may interact with cyclophosphamide so do not take any over-the-counter preparations without discussing this first with your consultant, rheumatology nurse or pharmacist.

Does cyclophosphamide affect fertility and pregnancy?

You need to inform your consultant if you think you could be pregnant. You should not have cyclophosphamide if you are pregnant or if you are planning a pregnancy.

You should not breast feed if you are having cyclophosphamide.

Cyclophosphamide can affect fertility in men and women and very occasionally, the effect may be permanent. The risk of infertility varies from person to person. Your consultant will discuss infertility risks with you in more detail.

Can I have vaccination injections while having cyclophosphamide?

You should avoid 'live' vaccines. These include rubella (German measles), shingles and some polio vaccines. You are advised to have a seasonal flu vaccination and pneumonia vaccination. Always ask the rheumatology team for advice before having a vaccination.

Can I drink alcohol while having cyclophosphamide?

It is recommended that you stay within the national guidelines for alcohol consumption which are set at 21 units per week for men and 14 units per week for women (one unit = half a pint of normal strength beer, one glass of wine or one shot/pub measure of spirit). Any alcohol drunk should be consumed evenly over the week.

Can I drive after having a cyclophosphamide infusion?

It is advised that you do not drive on the day you have a cyclophosphamide infusion.

As you can see, cyclophosphamide does have possible side effects. If you are at all uncertain about receiving this treatment, please discuss this with the medical staff.

Remember, while you are on this medication, it is your responsibility to ensure you have regular blood tests and it is important that you do not miss any of these tests. If your hospital appointment is rescheduled, contact the rheumatology helpline if you need more blood forms.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following:

Arthritis Care

Tel: 0808 800 4050

Website: www.arthritiscare.org.uk

NHS Choices

Website: www.nhs.uk

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Rheumatology helpline on 01384 244789 (this is an answer machine so please do not use this helpline in an emergency).

or speak to your pharmacist

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/rheumatology/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510

ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ (ਛੋਟਾ ਇਸ਼ਤਿਹਾਰ) ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਟ ਇੰਨਫਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज़ अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो पेशन्ट इनफरमेशन को-आरडीनेटर को टेलीफ़ोन नम्बर **0800 0730510** पर फ़ोन करें।

જો તમને આ પત્રિકા તમારી પોતાની ભાષા (ગુજરાતી)માં જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને પેશન્ટ ઇન્ફર્મેશન કો-ઓર્ડિનેટરનો **0800 0730510** પર સંપર્ક કરો.

আপনি যদি এই প্রচারপত্রটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে পেশেন্ট ইনফরমেশন কো-অর্ডিনেটরের সাথে **0800 0730510** এই নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

إذا كنت ترغب هذه الوريقة مترجمة بلغتك الاصلية (اللغة العربية) , فرجاء اتصل بمنسق المعلومات للمريض
0800 0730510 على النلقون **Information Co-ordinator**

حسب خبروت اسللف كوني زبان (آردو) میں حاصل كرنے كے لے بربر پائی ٹیلیفون نمبر **0800 0730510** پر حوضت اخروش كو۔ اور داحظ (مریضوں كے كے معلومات كی فروہی كے سلسلے میں اشر كے ساتھ رابطہ كمر کریں۔