

Ciclosporin

Rheumatology Department Patient Information Leaflet

Please keep this information in a safe place

Introduction

Ciclosporin is in a family of drugs called disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Whilst your specialist will suggest the drug he feels is best to treat you at the time, based on research and extensive knowledge of the drug, you will always have the choice to discuss other treatment options and alternative therapies.

What is ciclosporin?

Ciclosporin is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and sometimes psoriasis. It is also given to people having transplant surgery. In rheumatoid arthritis, it works by dampening down the body's immune system in order to reduce pain, swelling and stiffness.

How should I take ciclosporin?

Ciclosporin capsules are usually taken twice a day. Swallow them whole with plenty of water. The dose you take will depend on your body weight so your consultant will advise you how much to take. If you miss a dose, do not worry, just take your next dose when it is due. Do not double up on the dose.

Do not take ciclosporin with grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit one hour before taking your ciclosporin as grapefruit increases the amount of the drug available in your body which can worsen any possible side effects.

How long will it take to work?

It may take several weeks, possibly up to four months, before you see the full beneficial effect of the ciclosporin. You will be given your first prescription from the hospital that will usually last for two weeks. A further prescription should be obtained from your GP.

Will I have any side effects?

Most patients have no side effects. Side effects that can occur include a possible rise in blood pressure and kidney problems. If you have these side effects, they will usually improve if the dose of ciclosporin is reduced.

Other side effects include nausea (feeling sick), headaches, abdominal (stomach) discomfort, burning sensations in the hands and feet and a mild tremor. These side effects are usually mild and will usually settle down as your body adjusts to the treatment.

Occasionally, ciclosporin may cause the growth of fine downy hair on the sides of the face.

Do I need any special tests?

Yes because ciclosporin may affect some of the blood cells and also the blood pressure and kidneys.

You will need to have blood tests and your blood pressure checked every two weeks to begin with. The blood pressure checks can usually be carried out at your GP's surgery. When you are settled on the ciclosporin, your blood pressure and blood will be checked every month.

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 to Friday, 8.30am to 7.30pm (excluding 12noon to 5pm on Tuesday and 8am to 12noon on Friday) or Saturday, 8am to 10am. No appointments required.

Corbett Hospital: 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.

Can I take my other medication?

Ciclosporin is not a painkiller so you should carry on taking your usual painkillers, if you need them.

Some medicines may interact with ciclosporin so always tell any doctor who is prescribing for you that you take ciclosporin. If you are buying over-the-counter preparations, inform the pharmacist that you take ciclosporin. In particular St John's Wort will interact with ciclosporin so you should not take this.

Can I have vaccination injections?

You should avoid 'live' vaccines. These include polio, shingles and rubella (German measles). You should have your annual flu vaccination. Always ring the rheumatology helpline for advice before having a vaccination.

Can I drink alcohol whilst taking ciclosporin?

You can drink alcohol within reason but we recommend that you stay within the government guidelines (two to three units a day for women and three to four a day for men).

Does ciclosporin affect pregnancy?

Women who are pregnant or are breastfeeding should not take ciclosporin. If you are planning a pregnancy or become pregnant, you should discuss this with your consultant.

What alternatives are there to this treatment?

You do not have to take this treatment and can always discuss alternatives with the Rheumatology Department. Some people find that complementary therapy treatment is useful and leaflets about this, provided by Arthritis Research Council, are available in our clinics.

Over-the-counter medications may be used alone or in combination with prescribed medication you are taking; however, you are always advised to discuss these with your consultant before taking them. Medication bought over the counter may help to control your pain but **not always** the condition. Always tell the pharmacist which prescribed medications you are already taking when buying over-the-counter drugs.

Remember, whilst you are on this medication, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have regular blood tests and your blood pressure checked 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

You can download or print this leaflet 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 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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