

Cyclosporine for Glomerulonephritis

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What is cyclosporine (sy'e' kloe spor een)?

Cyclosporine is a type of medication known as an immunosuppressant. This medication works by lowering your body's harmful response to immune system diseases like glomerulonephritis. This medication is used to control your disease.

How do I take cyclosporine?

- Cyclosporine comes in a capsule (pill) form.
- There are different strengths available (25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg). You may need a combination of different strengths to make up your dose.
- Take the capsules orally (by mouth). **Swallow each capsule whole. Do not split, crush, open, or chew the capsules.**
- Take cyclosporine 2 times a day, about 12 hours apart. For example, if you take your first dose at 7 a.m., take your second dose in the evening at 7 p.m.

- You can take cyclosporine with or without food, but **you must take it the same way every time.**
 - › For example, if you take it with food, always take it with food. If you do not take it with food, never take it with food.
 - › Taking cyclosporine with food can help prevent side effects like nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) and vomiting (throwing up).
- **Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice while taking cyclosporine.** Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can raise the dose of cyclosporine in your body and cause more side effects.

What if I miss a dose?

- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember.
- If it is almost time to take your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at the regular time.
- **Do not take a double dose of medication.** This could lead to more side effects.

How will I know if the medication is working?

- You will have regular blood tests while taking this medication. This is to check how your body responds to cyclosporine. This will also help to lower any side effects.
- You will also have blood tests to check the level of cyclosporine in your body. This helps to determine your dose. Your renal team will tell you when to do these blood tests, and when to take cyclosporine on the days you are having these blood tests.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

What are the possible side effects?

- Common side effects of cyclosporine include:
 - › Nausea
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › Diarrhea (loose, watery poop)
 - › Loss of appetite (not feeling hungry)
 - › Acne (pimples)
 - › Hair growth
 - › Swollen gums
 - › Headache
 - › Tremors (body movements you cannot control)
 - › Tiredness
 - › Muscle cramps

These side effects may go away as you get used to the medication. If you keep having these side effects, talk to your health care team.

- Cyclosporine may raise your blood pressure, blood potassium, cholesterol, or blood sugar. Your regular blood tests will check for these. Your kidney function will also be checked.

- Cyclosporine may increase your risk of getting an infection. Wash your hands often and avoid close contact with anyone who may be sick. **If you are not feeling well** (like a bad sore throat or cough, pain when you pee) **and you have a fever** (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) **or chills, tell your health care team right away.**
- Cyclosporine may increase your risk of some cancers. Talk to your primary health care provider about screening tests you may need based on your age and sex.
 - › **Do not** use tanning beds.
 - › Always protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, protective clothing, and a hat.

Is cyclosporine safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding?

- Cyclosporine can enter the bloodstream of the fetus. Talk with your health care team about the risks and benefits before taking cyclosporine if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant.

- Cyclosporine can be transferred into breastmilk. Talk to your health care team before breastfeeding or chestfeeding. Your baby's health care provider may need to check them more often. Talk with your health care team about the risks and benefits.

How do I store this medication?

- Make sure to store cyclosporine in a dry place at room temperature away from sunlight.
- **Do not store cyclosporine in the bathroom.**
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.

What else do I need to know?

- Cyclosporine can interact with many medications. Other medications may affect the amount of cyclosporine in your body. It is important you talk with your pharmacist or health care team before starting any new medications, including over-the-counter medications, supplements, and natural products.
- Talk to your health care team about timing of vaccines while taking cyclosporine. Ask if there are any vaccines you should get to protect you while taking this medication.

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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