

# Cyclophosphamide for Glomerulonephritis

# Cyclophosphamide for Glomerulonephritis

## What is cyclophosphamide (sye kloe foss' fa mide)?

- Cyclophosphamide 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. Cyclophosphamide is used to control your disease.

## How do I take cyclophosphamide?

- Cyclophosphamide can be taken as:
  - › A capsule or tablet (pill) orally (by mouth)
  - › An injection with a needle

Your health care team will talk with you about what method is right for you.

- If you take **tablets**:
  - › Take cyclophosphamide once a day, in the morning.
  - › Take this medication with food to prevent nausea (feeling sick to your stomach).
  - › **Swallow each tablet whole. Do not split, crush, open, or chew the tablets.**

## **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.
- **It is very important that you take every dose of cyclophosphamide.** Missing even a few doses can cause your symptoms to come back.

## **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 cyclophosphamide.
- It will also help your health care team to lower any side effects.

## **What are the possible side effects?**

- Common side effects of cyclophosphamide include:
  - › Nausea
  - › Vomiting (throwing up)
  - › Headache
  - › Hair loss or thinning (usually, hair grows back once you are no longer taking the medication)

If you keep having these side effects, talk to your health care team.

- Cyclophosphamide may irritate (bother) your bladder. This risk is lowered by drinking enough fluids. Drink lots of fluids, usually at least 8 glasses, unless your health care team tells you otherwise. Tell your health care team if you have any trouble or pain while urinating (peeing) or if you see blood in your urine (pee). Empty your bladder often (every 2 to 4 hours).

- Cyclophosphamide may lower your white blood cells (cells that fight infection), red blood cells (cells that carry oxygen), or platelets (cells that help your blood clot). Your regular blood tests will check for this. **Tell your health care team if you have bruising or bleeding.**
- Cyclophosphamide 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.**
- Cyclophosphamide may affect your fertility (whether you can have children). Your health care team will ask you if you plan to have children before starting the medication. If you plan to have children in the future, this medication may not be right for you.

- Cyclophosphamide is **not** recommended during pregnancy, as it can harm the fetus. It is important for both males and females to prevent pregnancy while taking cyclophosphamide by using birth control.
- Breastfeeding or chestfeeding is not recommended while taking cyclophosphamide, as it can harm babies who are breastfed.
- Cyclophosphamide may increase your risk of some bladder or blood cancers. This is rare. Because of this risk, you will not be on this medication long-term. Talk to your primary health care provider about screening tests you may need based on your age and sex.

## **How do I store this medication?**

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

## **What else do I need to know?**

- Cyclophosphamide can interact with some medications. It is important to 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 when to get certain vaccines while taking cyclophosphamide. Ask if there are any vaccines you should get to protect you while taking this medication.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

# 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>

*Prepared by: Renal Program*  
*Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services*

WQ85-2422 © July 2024 Nova Scotia Health Authority  
To be reviewed July 2027 or sooner, if needed.