



PATIENT FACT SHEET

Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan)



WHAT IS IT?

Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan) is a potent immunosuppressant drug that decreases the immune response by blocking the production of DNA in immune cells. Cyclophosphamide is used

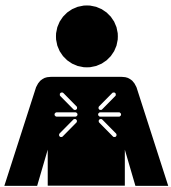
for severe complications of lupus; systemic sclerosis (scleroderma); some forms of vasculitis; myopathies such as polymyositis and dermatomyositis; and, sometimes, rheumatoid arthritis.



HOW TO TAKE IT

Cyclophosphamide is often used for 3-6 months put a disease into remission. Afterwards, a medication that may be less potent with fewer side effects is used to maintain the disease under control. Cyclophosphamide can be taken orally daily or can be given by injection given at the doctor's office or hospital every week to

every month. The dosing of cyclophosphamide varies from person to person and depends on the disease being treated. It may take several weeks for symptoms to improve and the full effect may take several months or longer.



SIDE EFFECTS

Common side effects, which may be worse with the pill form, include nausea and vomiting. These symptoms usually can be controlled with anti-nausea medications. Hair loss can occur, but will usually grow back when the medication is stopped. Other common side effects include skin rashes. Cyclophosphamide can also increase the risk of developing some kinds of infections, especially "shingles." Cyclophosphamide may cause a reduced number of white blood cells and make you more prone to infections. This can occur 8-12 days after starting treatment. Your doctor will

check your blood counts at this time and make dose adjustments as needed. Cyclophosphamide can cause infertility in both men and women. Although women taking cyclophosphamide can stop having periods, they can still become pregnant, so an effective form of birth control to prevent pregnancy should be used while taking this medication since cyclophosphamide can cause fetal harm. Cyclophosphamide may result in blood in the urine or scarring of the bladder. Patients taking oral cyclophosphamide should drink plenty of fluids each day to help prevent problems.



TELL YOUR DOCTOR

Before starting cyclophosphamide, let your physician know all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medicines and herbal supplements. Notify all your physicians when taking this drug or if you have been given this drug in the past. There are some long-term risks to be considered even years after taking the medication. Live vaccines should be avoided while on this medication, and caution should be taken if any household members

receive live vaccines. You should discuss updating your vaccinations prior to starting this medication. Women who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant should talk with their doctor before taking this drug. You should contact your doctor if you notice the following: blood in your urine, fevers or chills, easy bruising or bleeding, shortness of breath and/or swelling of the feet and ankles.

