

## Cyclophosphamide

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### About This Medicine

Cyclophosphamide is used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth) and in the vein (IV).

### Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection.
- Fever and neutropenic fever. A type of fever that can develop when you have a very low number of white blood cells which can be life-threatening.
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although with certain medicine, hair loss can sometimes be permanent. Hair loss may happen suddenly or gradually. If you lose hair, you may lose it from your head, face, armpits, pubic area, chest, and/or legs. You may also notice your hair getting thin.

**Note:** All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

### Warnings and Precautions

- Severe bone marrow suppression, which can be life-threatening. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Abnormal heartbeat and/or life-threatening heart changes such as inflammation (swelling) in the tissue of the heart and/or congestive heart failure - your heart is not pumping blood as well as it should be, and fluid can build up in your body.
- Effects on the bladder and kidneys that may be life-threatening. This medicine may cause inflammation, irritation and bleeding in the bladder and/or kidneys. You may have blood in your urine.
- Changes in your liver function and blockage of small veins in the liver, which can cause liver failure and be life-threatening.
- Inflammation and/or thickening of the lungs, and changes to the small vessels of your lungs. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing.
- This medicine may cause slow wound healing.
- A severe decreased level of sodium in your blood, which can be life-threatening.

- This medicine may raise your risk of getting a second cancer, such as acute leukemias and lymphomas.
- When given IV, this medicine may contain alcohol and may affect your central nervous system, which is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You may feel dizzy and very sleepy.

**Note:** *Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.*

## Important Information

- Your doctor may recommend that you drink extra fluids during or after your treatment to flush your bladder and urinate often to help decrease the risk of the effects on your bladder.
- Cyclophosphamide may cause slow wound healing. If you must have emergency surgery or have an accident that results in a wound, tell the doctor that you are on cyclophosphamide.
- This medicine may impair your ability to drive or use machinery. Use caution and talk to your doctor and/or nurse about any precautions you may need to take.

## How to Take Your Medicine

- **For Oral Only:** Swallow this medicine whole as prescribed per your doctor. Do not open, chew, break or crush it. Do not touch a broken or crushed tablet and/or capsule. Take the medicine in the morning.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your doctor for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water, before and after handling your medicine, your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- Cytotoxic medicines leave the body through urine and stool, but they can also be present in other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your health care provider after your treatment. If you take a cytotoxic pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- If you get any of the contents of a broken capsule or tablet on your skin, you should wash the area of the skin well with soap and water right away. Call your doctor if you get a skin reaction.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Do not store tablets or capsules at temperature above 30°C (86°F).
- **Disposal of unused oral medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medicine label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

## Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.



- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day. Avoid coloring your hair.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry. Limit your use of hair spray, electric curlers, blow dryers, and curling irons.
- If you are interested in getting a wig, talk to your nurse and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of cyclophosphamide with food.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with cyclophosphamide. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplement to make sure that there are no interactions.
- There are known interactions of cyclophosphamide with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.

## When to Call the Doctor



Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Dry cough
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Swelling of the legs, feet, or ankles
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Pain in your chest
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Decreased urine, very dark urine, or difficulty urinating
- Pain when passing urine or blood in urine
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Signs of possible severe low sodium levels: confusion, agitation, feeling that your heart is beating fast, passing out, seizure and/or coma
- Symptoms of being drunk, confusion, or being very sleepy
- If you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for up to 1 year after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 4 months after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- In women, menstrual bleeding may become irregular or stop while you are getting this medicine. Do not assume that you cannot become pregnant if you do not have a menstrual period.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 1 week after stopping treatment because this medicine could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.



- **Fertility warning:** In men and women both, this medicine may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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