



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust: Information for Families

Cyclophosphamide

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer. However, please note that this information sheet explains about the use of cyclophosphamide in children and young people so may differ from the manufacturer's information.

This fact sheet explains what cyclophosphamide is, how it is given and some of the possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines so your child will not necessarily suffer every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What is cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is a chemotherapy medicine used to treat certain types of cancer and leukaemia. It is also given to children before and after transplants and to treat some inflammatory conditions.

How is it given?

It is given as an injection or an infusion into a vein (intravenously or IV) through a cannula, central venous access device, implantable port or PICC line. It may be given by mouth in tablet or liquid form. Oral cyclophosphamide is best taken in the morning at the same time every day with plenty of water as directed by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What are the side effects?

Nausea and vomiting

Anti-sickness medicines can be given to reduce or prevent these symptoms. Please tell your doctor or nurse if your child's sickness is not controlled or persists.

Hair loss

Your child may lose some or all of his or her hair or it may become thinner. This is temporary and the hair will grow back once the treatment is finished.

Bone marrow suppression

There will be a temporary reduction in how well your child's bone marrow works. This means he or she may become anaemic, bruise or bleed more easily than usual, and have a higher risk of infection. Your child's blood counts will be checked regularly to see how the bone marrow is working. Please tell your doctor if your child seems unusually tired, has bruising or bleeding, or any signs of infection, especially a high temperature.





Strange taste

Your child may experience a strange taste in their mouth while receiving cyclophosphamide. This is temporary. They may prefer different flavoured foods.

Fertility

Depending on the combination of medicines and the dose that your child is given, his or her fertility may be affected. If you feel you would like more information, please discuss this with your doctor.

Irritation of the bladder wall

Cyclophosphamide can cause irritation of the bladder wall. This may lead to a condition called haemorrhagic cystitis which causes blood to appear in the urine. Your child will be given a medicine called mesna and intravenous fluids to reduce or stop this irritation. Masna is used to protect the bladder wall from harmful effects of cyclophosphamide. It works by binding to and detoxifying the metabolites (or products) of cyclophosphamide that can be harmful. He or she will also be encouraged to drink lots of fluids. Your child's urine may be tested for blood while they are receiving cyclophosphamide.

Hot flushes and dizziness

Cyclophosphamide can sometimes cause your child to feel hot and dizzy. This is most likely to happen when cyclophosphamide is given as a slow intravenous injection in a vein.

Secondary cancers

If your child is given cyclophosphamide

for a long time, there is a very small risk of him or her developing a second cancer after many years. If you feel you need more information, discuss this with your doctor.

Changes in nails

Your child's nails may become darker. Your child's nail growth will return to normal in the future.

Changes in heart function

In some cases when high doses of cyclophosphamide are administered, the drug may alter the muscle of your child's heart and how well it works. Before having high dose cyclophosphamide, your child will have a test called an echocardiogram (Echo). This test will also be used to monitor the heart during the course of treatment and at long-term follow-up clinic.

Interactions with other medicines

Some medicines can react with cyclophosphamide, altering how well it works. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicine, including medicines on prescription from your family doctor (GP), medicines bought from a pharmacy (chemist) or any herbal or complementary medicines.



Important information you should know

- Keep all medicines and tablets in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- Store in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight or heat.
- You should handle these medicines with care. Avoid touching the tablets wherever possible. If you are pregnant or think you could be pregnant, please discuss handling instructions with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- They should be taken as directed by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- If your child vomits after taking the dose, inform the doctor or nurse as your child may need to take another dose. Do not give them another dose without informing the doctor or nurse.
- If you forget to give your child their dose, do not give them a double dose. Inform your doctor or nurse and keep to your child's regular schedule.
- Sometimes it is necessary to halve tablets to get the correct dose. A tablet cutter may be used for this, but you should keep it only for cutting chemotherapy drugs.
- If your child cannot swallow tablets, the Pharmacy department can order a liquid preparation for you.

Useful numbers

GOSH switchboard	020 7405 9200
Pharmacy department	020 7829 8680
Pharmacy medicines information	020 7829 8608

Notes



Compiled by the Pharmacy Department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group.

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www.goshfamilies.nhs.uk

www.childrenfirst.nhs.uk