

# Cyclophosphamide

Information for patients of the Interstitial Lung Disease Clinic

## What is the name of the medicine my doctor has prescribed?

Generic Name	Brand Name
Cyclophosphamide (sahy-kluh-fos-fuh-mahyd)	Cytoxan

## Why is this medication being recommended for me?

Cyclophosphamide is in a class of drugs called “immunosuppressants.”

Cyclophosphamide affects your body’s immune system and lowers the amount of inflammation or active damage in your lungs. Inflammation is the precursor to fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs.

By lowering inflammation, it is hoped that Cyclophosphamide will prevent lung fibrosis from forming and inflamed lung will return to normal.



## **What should I remember when taking Cyclophosphamide?**

Before taking Cyclophosphamide:

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to Cyclophosphamide or any other drugs.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking, especially aspirin and vitamins.
- Tell your doctor if you have, or have ever had liver or kidney disease. The dose of Cyclophosphamide may need to be adjusted for you.
- Cyclophosphamide may interfere with the normal menstrual cycle (period) in women and may stop sperm production in men. It can also cause permanent infertility (not being able to have a baby or to get someone pregnant). However, you should not assume that you cannot get pregnant, or that you cannot get someone else pregnant.
  - Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should tell their doctors before they begin taking this medicine.
  - Use a dependable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy since taking Cyclophosphamide may harm the baby.
  - Both men and women should avoid starting a family (getting pregnant) while taking Cyclophosphamide and for 6 months after treatment with Cyclophosphamide.

## **What are the possible side effects of this medicine?**

Side effects from Cyclophosphamide are common and may include:

- nausea or vomiting (throwing up)
- thinning or brittle hair
- darkened and thickened skin
- fatigue (feeling very tired)
- loss of appetite or weight
- low blood counts – this can increase your risk of an infection or bleeding or bruising

If you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor right away:

- painful urination or red urine
- black, tarry stools
- blistering of the mouth or skin
- bruising or bleeding that is not normal
- congestion (stuffy nose)
- fever
- dizziness
- chills
- worsening cough or shortness of breath
- sore throat
- swelling of the feet or ankles
- nausea and vomiting
- rash

### **What monitoring will I need?**

There are 2 ways to take Cyclophosphamide:

1. by mouth (a pill)
2. intravenous injection (IV)

The way you take this medication will determine how you are monitored. Your doctor will order regular lab tests to check how you are doing while taking Cyclophosphamide and, to watch for drug toxicity.

You will need to have regular blood tests to check your blood counts (white blood cells, red blood cells, platelets), and liver enzymes. You will also need to have your urine tested. Depending on the results, your doctor may need to order some other tests.

## **Who can I call if I have questions or concerns about Cyclophosphamide?**

Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about this medication.

This site does not provide medical advice. These sheets are developed by the UHN Pharmacy Department. They are provided for informational purposes only. These sheets are meant to supplement a discussion with the pharmacist. Please contact a pharmacist or other health care professionals if you have any further questions regarding this medication.



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