

Cyclophosphamide Injection (Cytosan®)

Medication description and common side effects

This handout answers questions about cyclophosphamide and explains common side effects, when to contact your care team, and other important information you should know.

Questions and answers

What is cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is a type of chemotherapy that is used to treat many different cancers. It can be given alone or with other chemotherapy drugs.

How will I receive cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is given as a short infusion through your vein (intravenous). You may receive a dose every 2-4 weeks, depending on your treatment plan.

Common side effects

The chart below includes the most common side effects of cyclophosphamide and how to manage them. Other side effects may occur. Please contact your care team to report symptoms and for questions about managing your symptoms.

Common side effects	What you should do
Decreased blood counts (lowered platelets, red and white blood cells) Symptoms include: • Weakness and tiredness • Higher risk of infections • Bruising	• Report any signs of infection, fever, chills, shaking, and unusual bleeding and bruising to your care team. • Your care team will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts.

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Common side effects	What you should do
Blood in your urine (hematuria)	• Drink plenty of fluids (8-12 cups each day) on the day(s) of your treatment and the day after your treatment. • Empty your bladder (go pee) every 2 hours while you are awake and before you go to bed for at least 24 hours after each treatment. • Your care team may also tell you to get up in the night to empty your bladder. This helps prevent bladder and kidney problems. • You may need to give a urine sample to the lab when you arrive for your blood draw in the morning. The urine will be tested for any microscopic (very small) blood in the urine. • Your care team may prescribe a medication called mesna. Mesna helps to protect the bladder (the organ where urine collects in the body). This medication is given at the clinic and through the vein before and after your cyclophosphamide.
Nausea and vomiting	• Take anti-nausea medication(s) as instructed by your care team. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Hair loss • May begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. • With lower doses, your hair may thin. • With higher doses, you may become totally bald. • Your scalp may feel tender.	• Use a gentle baby shampoo and soft brush. • Avoid hair spray, bleaches, dyes, and perms. • Protect your scalp with a hat, scarf, or wig in cold weather. Some health plans may pay part of the cost of a wig. The resource center on the 3rd floor of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance clinic has free wigs and offers free wig fittings by appointment only. Contact the resource center at resourcectr@seattlecca.org.

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Common side effects	What you should do
Hair loss (continued) - You may also lose hair on your face and body. - Your hair will grow back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments; color and texture may change.	- Cover your head or use sunscreen daily, even on cloudy days. - Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching. - If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses.

When to contact transplant triage

Call transplant triage immediately if you have signs of:

- Infection
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Pain or burning when you urinate
- Bleeding problems
 - Black tarry stools
 - Blood in urine
 - Tiny red spots on skin the size of a pinpoint
- Urination problems
 - Frequent need to urinate
 - Pain when you urinate

Contact information for transplant triage

	Hours	Phone
Business hours	Monday-Friday 8 am-10 pm Saturday-Sunday 8 am-6 pm Holidays 8 am-5 pm	(206) 606-7600
After hours	Monday-Friday 10 pm-8 am Saturday-Sunday 6 pm-8 am Holidays 5 pm-8 am	(206) 598-8902

When to contact your care team

Please contact your care team to report any symptoms, including:

- Severe skin reaction (rash, redness, pain, blisters) where you have had radiation
- Anemia
 - Unusual tiredness or weakness
- Heart
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Swelling of feet or lower legs
- Kidney
 - Lower back or side pain
 - Swelling of feet or lower legs
 - Numbness or tingling in feet or hands
- Lungs
 - Shortness of breath or hacking cough
- Gout
 - Joint pain

Other important information

Cyclophosphamide and fertility

- If you plan to have children, discuss this with your care team before being treated with cyclophosphamide.
- Cyclophosphamide may cause sterility in people who ejaculate and menopause in people with ovaries, which may be permanent.
- Use birth control while being treated with cyclophosphamide.
- Tell your care team right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Cyclophosphamide may damage sperm and may harm a baby if used during pregnancy.
- Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- Ask your care team for the [fertility preservation handout](#) and if you have any questions about pregnancy and cyclophosphamide or other chemotherapy drugs.

Medication interactions with cyclophosphamide

Tell your care team if you are taking any medications, including the medications below. These medications may interact with cyclophosphamide.

- Chloramphenicol
- Digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin®)
- Warfarin (Coumadin®)

Before starting any new medications, check with your care team or pharmacist.

Food interactions with cyclophosphamide

There are no known food interactions while taking cyclophosphamide.

More about cyclophosphamide

To learn more about cyclophosphamide, visit

<https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a611044.html> or ask your care team or pharmacist for more information. You can also visit the the Patient and Family Resource Center (3rd floor of Seattle Cancer Care Alliance) for a printed copy of the medline webpage.