

Taking ciclosporin for corneal eye inflammation

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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What is ciclosporin?

Ciclosporin is a drug that can help reduce redness and swelling (inflammation) in the eye. It is an immunosuppressant. It reduces the strength of your body's immune system and helps reduce inflammation. It is given to patients who have redness and inflammation of the eye, as it has proved to be useful in controlling these symptoms.

Ciclosporin is a 'generic drug'. It may be available under different brand names. We prescribe the brand of ciclosporin called Neoral which is available as capsules (25mg, 50mg, 100mg). Different brands may work differently, so it is important you have the Neoral brand when you collect your prescription. When you are running out of your prescription, you must let us know so we can send you a new prescription. You can then collect the prescription from a local pharmacy.

Please note: It is important that you read the manufacturer's leaflet, as well as this leaflet, because it contains general information about the drug that you will need to know. However, the manufacturer's leaflet is not written for patients with eye conditions, so some of the information in it may not be relevant to you.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Why have I been given ciclosporin?

You have been given this drug to improve your eye condition. It does not give pain relief and doesn't work straight away, but it can improve symptoms over a longer period of time.

If you are on painkillers or anti-inflammatory drugs, it is important that you should continue to take them unless your doctor tells you not to.

How will ciclosporin help me?

Ciclosporin works by controlling inflammation. It acts on certain cells in the immune system. It is also used to help stop rejection of a cornea transplant.

What dose of ciclosporin should I take?

Ciclosporin is usually taken 2 times a day, in equal doses. **You should avoid grapefruit juice for 1 hour before taking ciclosporin.** Take them with food. Do not break or crush them. Do not take any that are broken or split. Your eye doctor will advise you about the exact dose depending on your condition and weight.

We may start you on a low strength dose of ciclosporin but this may be increased when we see you in clinic. It can take 6 to 12 weeks before it starts to work, as the level of drug builds up in your blood over time.

Do not change the dose. If you stop taking the drug you will need to tell us by contacting the specialist nurse. Whilst taking ciclosporin do not take any over-the-counter medicines without seeking advice from your eye doctor.

Are there any side effects or risks?

All drugs have side effects, although most patients do not experience any. Some common side effects include:

- loss of appetite (1 in 100)
- feeling tired (1 in 100)
- diarrhoea / feeling sick (nausea) / being sick (vomiting) (1 in 100)
- fever / hot flushes (1 in 100)
- body hair growth (1 in 100)

- headache (1 in 10)
- tender gums (1 in 100)
- some patients at Leicester have also mentioned hair thinning/hair loss
- affects on your kidneys (1 in 10)
- anaemia (1 in 1000)
- shaking of your body that you cannot control (tremor) (1 in 10)
- increased blood pressure (1 in 10) - your blood pressure will be checked in clinic at your appointment
- muscle weakness (1 in 10,000)
- As ciclosporin reduces the strength of your body's immune system, this may also increase your risk of getting an infection and increase the risk of developing cancer of the lymphatic glands (lymphoma).

Having regular blood tests

You **must** have regular blood tests to make sure the drugs are not affecting your body. If you do not have regular blood tests we will need to stop the ciclosporin.

You can book a blood test with your GP, or you can come to the walk in test centre at the Leicester Royal Infirmary at any time to have this done.

You should take your tablet at 10am, and have your blood test at 9am. You need to have your blood test before your next dose of the drug. We need to know how much of the drug is in your blood, so we can make sure the dose you are receiving is correct.

A blood test should be done every week, for the first 6 weeks; then once a month while you are taking the drug.

The blood forms (forms you will need for your blood test) will be given to you in clinic to start with. You need to contact the specialist nurse to have more blood forms posted to you.

Can I start a family whilst on ciclosporin?

Whether you are a man or a woman taking ciclosporin, if you want to start a family, you should talk to your doctor as soon as possible as you may need to come off your medication.

If you decide to stop taking ciclosporin so you can start a family, you will need to continue to have protected sex for 6 weeks after you come off your medication. Talk to your GP about effective forms of contraception.

If you are a woman on ciclosporin and think you might be pregnant, you should see your GP for advice.

Can I take other drugs or medicines along with ciclosporin?

Some drugs may interact with ciclosporin. You should always tell any doctor treating you that you are taking ciclosporin. You should not take any over-the-counter medications without discussing first with your doctor or pharmacist.

If you need a vaccine (immunisation), you must tell your GP that you are taking this medication as some 'live' vaccines should not be given to patients taking ciclosporin. Examples of live vaccines include:

- Oral polio
- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- Yellow fever
- BCG (for tuberculosis)

The following immunisations are not 'live' and can be given although they may be less effective whilst you are on this drug:

- Hepatitis (A and B)
- Flu (influenza)
- Absorbed diphtheria (low dose) and tetanus vaccines for adults and adolescents
- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Hib (Haemophilus Influenza B)
- Typhoid
- Meningococcal vaccines (meningitis)

Can I drink alcohol while taking ciclosporin?

Alcohol has no effect on the drug. You only need to avoid grapefruit juice 1 hour before taking your dose.

Is there anything else I should avoid while taking this?

Ciclosporin may make your skin sensitive to sunlight and can therefore increase your chance of skin cancer. You should avoid being out in the sun for long periods at a time. When in the sun wear protective clothing, sunglasses and sunscreen SPF 30 or above. Do not use sun beds.

You should avoid contact with anyone who has chickenpox or shingles especially if you haven't had these infections. If you develop either you should stop taking your medication and seek urgent medical advice from your eye doctor or nurse.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not double the dose. Do not take any more within 10 hours. Try to keep to regular times to minimise missing doses.

Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

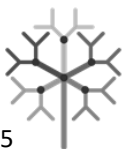
If you have any concerns or questions about your treatment, you should discuss this with your doctor or nurse. You can also contact us from the details below:

Corneal Nurse Specialist: 07970 940 125
Eye Casualty Department: 0116 258 6273
Ophthalmology Secretary: 0116 258 5918

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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 Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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