

Department of Gastroenterology

Ciclosporin

Why am I prescribed ciclosporin?

This is a drug that affects the immune system in the body. It has been shown to be beneficial in reducing symptoms in patients who have had a severe episode of their inflammatory bowel disease or patients who have not responded adequately to steroids.

Unlike other types of immunosuppressant tablets it does not depress the production of blood cells in the bone marrow but it can have effects in other parts of the body and therefore treatment needs to be closely monitored.

How do I take ciclosporin?

It may be given intravenously or orally during an inpatient stay and the dose is calculated according to your weight. The doctor will work out the correct dose for your case. Once remission has been achieved (usually up to seven days) the drug will be given in tablet form or as a liquid.

You should take a morning and evening dose, 12 hours apart, i.e. 0700 and 1900 hours or 0830 and 2030 hours. It is important to take your doses at the same time each day.

Do I need any special checks/tests whilst on ciclosporin?

It is important that your doctor can check to see if the treatment is working and also to reduce the side-effects of treatment. In order to do this you will need regular blood tests whilst on the treatment.

The tests you will require are:-

- A full blood count, liver function tests and kidney function tests
- Ciclosporin drug levels.
- Blood pressure.

Initially these tests should be carried out on a two weekly basis for three months, then monthly thereafter whilst continuing on the treatment.

On the day of your blood test do not take your morning ciclosporin dose until after you have had your blood test.

Blood levels of ciclosporin should be maintained between 150-300 mcg/L and the dosage will be adjusted accordingly.

Record the results in the patient held record book given to you by the hospital doctor/specialist IBD nurse. It is important to bring this book to clinic appointments and to any GP appointments you may have.

Are there any side-effects?

- Nausea, abdominal discomfort, tremor, headache, muscle cramps, muscle pain and tiredness are reasonably common at the start of treatment. These effects should settle over the first few weeks.
- In addition your blood pressure may be increased. Your GP will monitor this regularly and if necessary prescribe treatment to keep this under control.
- Your GP will also monitor how well your kidneys and your liver are working via a blood test as ciclosporin may affect your kidneys and liver.
- Less common are inflamed gums, confusion, rashes, muscle weakness, gout, fluid retention and weight gain. If these occur or if any side-effects are persistent or worsening and particularly if they occur after recently starting treatment or increasing dose, then you should speak with your GP, specialist IBD nurse for further advice.
- Other rare problems such as reduced bone marrow activity may lead to an increased risk of infections, anaemia.

Special warnings/precautions

- Ciclosporin should be avoided if you have previously had an allergic reaction to it.
- Ciclosporin is not usually associated with problems in pregnancy. However, ciclosporin should only be given in pregnancy if the benefits outweigh the potential risks. If you are planning a pregnancy or become pregnant whilst taking the treatment you should speak to your doctor as soon as possible for further advice

Are there any problems taking ciclosporin with other medication?

- Ciclosporin may interact with a large number of other drugs, so it is important that you tell your GP, hospital doctor, specialist IBD nurse and pharmacist about any other tablets you are taking.
- If you are purchasing any drugs over the counter then please tell the pharmacist that you are on ciclosporin.
- Drinking grapefruit juice may increase side-effects from ciclosporin. Therefore you should avoid grapefruit juice whilst you are on ciclosporin.
- You should avoid certain types of vaccinations (live vaccines) whilst on ciclosporin. Your GP, hospital doctor or specialist IBD nurse will be able to advise you on this.

Further information

This leaflet is only a guide. Further information may be obtained from the manufacturer's patient information leaflet that you will get with the drug and also from your hospital doctor, GP, specialist nurse.

If you have side-effects or problems with your medication you can contact the specialist IBD nurse on 01223 257212.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



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