



CYCLOSPORINE

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Cyclosporine is a medication designed to suppress the immune system. It is very effective in psoriasis and many other conditions. It works fairly quickly. Though powerful, it causes very few serious reactions when used for short periods of time (days, weeks, or a few months). It is considered a short-term treatment for psoriasis and is safest when given for less than one year.

Problems with kidney function, including kidney failure, and hypertension can occur in cases where the drug is used for over one year.

Short-term side effects of cyclosporine may include headache, nausea, tingling in the fingers and toes, aches in joints, growth of hair where it is not desired, and swelling of the gums. While these side effects sound awful, most people do not experience them at lower dosages. The medication need not be stopped in the case of these side effects, and they many go away with continued use of the medication.

Short-term use of cyclosporine can also cause elevation of the blood pressure, decrease in kidney function, as well as elevation of cholesterol and triglycerides. These functions must be monitored and the dosage lowered if they occur. Sometimes the drug must be stopped at least for a while.

To maximize safety, it is important to follow these rules:

- All physicians, dentists, pharmacists you deal with must know you are on cyclosporine.
- Do not take any new medications while on cyclosporine unless your doctor has checked to make sure it is safe with cyclosporine.
- Medications, which could cause trouble with cyclosporine, include some anti-inflammatory medications, certain antibiotics (nafcillin, trimethoprim-sulfa, erythromycin, certain fungus medications, and others).
- Avoid drinking grapefruit juice. This one type of juice has the ability to raise the blood levels of cyclosporine to high levels. Orange juice is ok.
- Take the medication in two doses during the day, rather than all at once.
- Get blood tests and an examination every two weeks for the first month and again two weeks after any dosage change. The blood tests should be obtained in the morning, without breakfast.
- Do not take the medication if you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding.
- Have a dental examination every four months while on cyclosporine.

Following these recommendations will allow using this very effective medication with the greatest safety.

This information has been provided to you compliments of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology and your physician.

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