Cyclophosphamide Injection (Cytoxan®)

Drug description and common side effects

What is cyclophosphamide?
Cyclophosphamide is a type of chemotherapy that is used to treat many different cancers. It can be given alone or in combination 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.

If you will be receiving your cyclophosphamide in the clinic, you may need to give a urine sample to the lab first thing in the morning when you arrive for blood draw.

What are the common side effects?
The following are the most common side effects. Others 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) may occur. Symptoms include: • Weakness and tiredness • Higher risk of infections • Bruising Your care team will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts.	• Report any signs of infection, fever, and unusual bleeding or bruising.
Hematuria (blood in your urine) may occur while you are being treated with cyclophosphamide.	• Drink plenty of fluids (8 to 12 cups each day) on the day(s) of your treatment and the day after your treatment. • Empty your bladder (pass urine) 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.
Nausea and vomiting may occur while you are taking cyclophosphamide. Many people have little or no nausea.	• Take antinausea medication(s) as instructed by your care team. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.

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Common side effects	What you should do
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. • 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.	• 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 extended health plans may pay part of the cost of a wig. • 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.

Call and seek help immediately if you have signs of:

- Infection: fever, chills, cough, pain or burning when you urinate.
- Bleeding problems: black tarry stools, blood in urine, pinpoint red spots on skin.
- Bladder problems: blood in urine, frequent need to pass urine, pain when you pass urine.

Contact your care team if you have signs of the following problems:

- Severe skin reaction 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.

Pregnancy and cyclophosphamide

Cyclophosphamide may cause sterility in men and menopause in women, which may be permanent. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with cyclophosphamide. Cyclophosphamide may damage sperm and may harm a baby if used during pregnancy. Use birth control while being treated with cyclophosphamide. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment. Ask your care team if you have any questions regarding pregnancy and cyclophosphamide or other chemotherapy medications.

Drug interactions

Other drugs such as chloramphenicol, digoxin (Lanoxin®), phenobarbital, phenytoin (Dilantin®), or warfarin (Coumadin®) may interact with cyclophosphamide. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as your dose may need to be changed. Check with your care team or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

Food interactions

There are no known food and drug interactions while taking cyclophosphamide.

For more complete information, please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a611044.html from your care team, pharmacist, or visit the Patient and Family Resource Center on the 3rd floor of SCCA.