

CYCLOSPORINE [CYCLO-SPOR-IN]

- Also known as Neoral; available as soft gelatin capsules or oral solution

What does the medication look like?



What is this medication for?

Cyclosporine is a medication used to lower your body's immune system to prevent your transplanted organ from being rejected. It makes your white blood cells weaker so they cannot damage the new organ.

How should I take this medication?

It is important to take your medications at the same time each day in order to keep a steady amount (drug level) in your body.

<p>For cyclosporine: take this medication every 12 hours (for example 9 AM and 9 PM)</p>	<p>Your medication times: _____</p>
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- Cyclosporine should be taken **with food** to decrease stomach upset, but may be taken on an empty stomach if preferred. Be consistent, if you take it with food, always take it with food; if you take it on an empty stomach, always take it on an empty stomach.
- Avoid grapefruit, grapefruit juice, pomelo or Seville orange fruit/ juice while on this medication due to a serious interaction.
- In case you need to go for a procedure or an operation that requires you to not eat anything before (fasting), you **must** still take your transplant medications with a sip of water at your regular time.

Cyclosporine Oral Solution:

- If you are taking the oral liquid, you may add the medication to a glass or ceramic container (**NOT plastic**) half full of apple or orange juice (**NOT grapefruit juice**) to improve the taste. Drink the liquid immediately after mixing.
- After drinking all of the liquid containing the medication, add some more liquid to the glass and drink it to be sure you get the full dose of your cyclosporine.
- After you have measured your dose, dry the outside of the dropper with a clean tissue. Do not rinse the dropper with water or any other liquid. Do not throw the dropper away, as you only get ONE dropper per bottle. This dropper is specifically designed to be used with the cyclosporine.

Cyclosporine levels:

Please clarify with the transplant clinic which option is best for you.

- 1.** Pre dose level: do NOT take your morning dose before your blood work. Bring your dose to the clinic or lab so you can take it after the blood work is done.
- 2.** Cyclosporine level at 2 hours after dose. Be sure you note the exact time you took your dose so the lab can document this information when they take your blood sample.

Missed Dose or Vomited Dose:

If you **miss a dose**, take your medication as soon as you remember and then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. If you are more than half way to your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. Do not double or take extra doses.

If you **missed more than 1 day** of anti-rejection medications, contact your transplant team immediately for further instructions.

If you **vomit** within 30 minutes of taking the dose or if you see some of the medication come up, then repeat the dose. Otherwise, just continue on with your next scheduled dosing time.

What are some possible side effects of this medication?

<i>Side Effect</i>	Management
<i>Tremor, shakiness, headache, seizures</i>	Presence of these side effects may be a sign of high cyclosporine levels. Report these symptoms to your doctor or transplant team
<i>High cholesterol level</i>	Eat healthy, well-balanced meals. Eat foods lower in fat and sugar content. Ask the dietitian to help you with an eating plan.
<i>High blood sugar</i>	Blood sugar will be monitored and treatment may be required for high blood sugars. Report any numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, increased thirst, dry mouth, fruity odour on your breath, or increased urinary frequency to your doctor. If you are a diabetic, make sure you monitor your sugars regularly and take your diabetic medications as prescribed.
<i>Nausea, vomiting, stomach discomfort</i>	Check with your doctor if any of these are bothersome or persistent.
<i>Unusual growth of gum tissue and gum bleeding</i>	Brush and floss your teeth daily and visit your dentist regularly. Report these symptoms to your doctor.
<i>Your body's ability to handle illness or injury is weakened by cyclosporine</i>	Report signs of infection (fever, chills, rapid heart rate, colds and flu) to your transplant team. Try to avoid close contact with people who have active infections. Practice frequent hand washing.
<i>Decrease in kidney function</i>	<i>High cyclosporine levels may decrease your kidney function. Your cyclosporine levels will be closely monitored and the dose will be adjusted as needed. Notify your doctor if you notice any changes in your urine or the amount produced.</i>
<i>High potassium level</i>	Your potassium levels will be monitored. Report any muscle weakness, numbness in your limbs or irregular heartbeats to your transplant team immediately.
<i>Acne or other skin changes, excessive hair growth on face or body</i>	Report these symptoms to your doctor.
Cancer	Taking this medication may increase your risk of skin and other cancers. Please inform your transplant team if you are diagnosed with cancer. For additional information, please see section on "Cancer Risk".