

TVCN Principal Treatment Centre, Children's Hospital

# Oral cyclophosphamide to treat rhabdomyosarcoma

Information for parents and patients



## What is Cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is a chemotherapy drug given together with other chemotherapy drugs to treat rhabdomyosarcoma.

It comes in tablet or liquid form. Cyclophosphamide is not licensed for use in children, but is a very effective and safe drug. Always handle the tablets or liquid with gloves

## How is it given?

Cyclophosphamide is given by mouth and needs to be taken at the same time each day. It is better to take cyclophosphamide in the morning, one hour before food on an empty stomach. Patients must drink enough during the day to flush the kidneys and decrease the amount of drug remaining in the bladder overnight, which can cause bladder toxicity.

### **Tablets**

Wear gloves. Take the tablets whole with water or juice only – this will reduce nausea and to help the body to absorb and use the medicine.

### **Liquid**

#### **For children taking the oral liquid:**

1. Put on gloves.
2. Measure correct dose, as written on the label or dosing chart, using an oral syringe or medicine spoon.
3. Wash the spoon or syringe using warm soapy water separate from other dishes. Discard gloves.

## Are there any precautions about food or other medications?

Check with the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist before giving **any** other prescription or non-prescription medicines, herbs, or vitamins to your child.

## What should I do if a dose is missed?

If a dose is missed, give it as soon as you remember that day.

**Never give a double dose.**

If your child vomits within 30 minutes of receiving a dose, give it again. If your child vomits after 30 minutes, do not repeat the dose.

Call Kamran's Ward if more than one dose is missed or vomited.

## What are the side effects?

### **Common side effects**

- Low blood counts
- Nausea and / or vomiting
- Irritation of the bladder lining. It is important to drink plenty of fluids to help prevent this irritation.
- Bruising and bleeding (let your doctor know if you have any unexplained bruising or bleeding)
- Hair loss

### **Occasional side effects**

- Diarrhoea
- Mouth sores
- Changes in nails – nails may become darker or ridged. This is not permanent and nails will grow out normally after treatment stops.
- Skin changes – skin may darken, but this is rare

## When should I call the doctor?

You should call Kamran's Ward if you notice any:

- fever or chills
- mouth sores – good mouth care will help to prevent this
- continued vomiting or diarrhoea
- bleeding or unusual bruising
- skin rash
- coughing or breathlessness
- signs of an allergic reaction such as:
  - rash or hives or
  - wheezing.

## What happens if I spill some of the liquid?

- Put gloves on.
- Mop up the cyclophosphamide liquid with kitchen towel. Any spillages can be diluted with a little bit of water. Wash the area with more soapy water. All gloves and kitchen towels should be doubled bagged and placed in the household rubbish bag.
- Wash hands afterwards.

## How do I store the medications?

Store all medicines in their original containers and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children's reach, locked up if possible. The cyclophosphamide oral liquid needs to be stored in the fridge.

## Are there any precautions when handling the medications?

All caregivers should wear gloves when handling urine, stool, and vomit while your child is receiving the cyclophosphamide. Urine, stool, and vomit can be safely disposed of in toilet.

Any clothing or bed linens that are contaminated with urine, stool, or vomit should be washed separately from other laundry in hot water and detergent. Anyone handling the contaminated laundry should wear gloves.

## What else do I need to know?

- Blood samples will be needed to watch the effects of the medicine.
- You and your child should know the names of all the medicines being taken.
- Share this information with anyone involved in your child's care.
- Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand.
- Check the label for the expiry date.
- Bring outdated or extra medicines back to pharmacy for disposal. Do not flush medication down the toilet or throw them in the bin.
- Bring any empty bottles back to the ward. Pharmacy needs the bottles back for their records.
- If too much or the wrong kind of chemotherapy medicine is taken, call your doctor straight away.

## Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, all the contact numbers you need are in your shared care diary.



If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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