

CYCLOSPORINE (Neoral[®])

GENERIC NAME	BRAND NAMES	REASON FOR USE
Cyclosporine Strengths: 10, 25, 50 and 100 mg capsules 100 mg/ mL oral solution	NEORAL [®]	Cyclosporine is an <u>anti-rejection</u> drug. It works to suppress specific cells of your immune system in order to prevent rejection of your transplanted organ.

SIDE EFFECTS

1. INCREASED BLOOD PRESSURE

Your blood pressure will be monitored. You may require treatment with blood pressure medications.

2. HARMFUL EFFECTS ON THE KIDNEY

The level of cyclosporine in your blood will be closely monitored and the dose will be adjusted if needed. Your kidney function will be monitored with a blood test called creatinine.

3. TREMBLING OF THE HANDS

This is usually related to the level of cyclosporine in the blood. This usually subsides with time as blood levels are decreased.

4. SWELLING OF THE GUMS

Good mouth hygiene and regular dental check-ups can minimize this problem.

5. GASTROINTESTINAL UPSET

This may include stomach upset and diarrhea. The degree to which this occurs is variable and will depend on how your body reacts with the medication.

6. DIABETES (Increased blood sugar)

Your blood sugar (glucose) levels will be monitored. You may require treatment with medication if your blood glucose levels remain persistently high.

7. INCREASED HAIR GROWTH

Report this to the transplant team if it becomes bothersome.

8. INCREASED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO INFECTION

Try to avoid close contact with people who have active infections. Report any symptoms of infection such as fever, sore throat, chills, or fast pulse to a doctor or your transplant team *immediately*.

9. INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING CANCER

The risk for developing certain types of cancers is higher. It is important to be aware of and report any changes in your body that could indicate a problem.

CYCLOSPORINE (Neoral®)

DOSAGE ADJUSTMENTS

Cyclosporine is usually taken twice daily. Doses should be spaced twelve hours apart (e.g. 9:00 am and 9:00 pm) in order to maintain a consistent amount of drug in your body. You will be advised to adjust your dose up or down based on the amount of drug absorbed into your blood. Blood tests are usually done two hours after the dose is taken. Changes in dose are common so always check with your transplant team if you are unsure of your current dose.

STORAGE

Store this medication at room temperature. Do not expose to extremes of temperature (e.g. direct sunlight or refrigeration) as this may inactivate cyclosporine. Do not remove the capsules from their foil packaging until you are ready to take them.

INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS

- Many medications can change the level of cyclosporine in your blood. This may cause serious problems.
- Do not take **any** medications, including non-prescription drugs or prescriptions (given to you by anyone other than your transplant doctors), without first contacting your transplant team.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice as these can increase cyclosporine levels.

REMEMBER

Wear/carry identification (i.e. Medic-Alert) stating that you are immunocompromised.

This drug is available at no charge through a special program run by the Ontario Ministry of Health. In order to access cyclosporine free through this program it must be obtained from the Toronto General Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy.

CYCLOSPORINE PRODUCT INFORMATION

CAPSULES: Neoral®

- Usually supplied as 25mg and 100mg capsules (10 and 50mg also available)
- Dose may be any combination of these strengths – check strengths carefully
- Take with fluids e.g. water, juice, milk
- Avoid grapefruit as this can increase your blood levels of cyclosporine
- Capsules have an unpleasant skunk-like odour
- Remove capsules from the foil package **only when ready to take**

ORAL SOLUTION: Neoral®

- Supplied in a bottle with syringe
- Place syringe in bottle, draw up correct amount as indicated on scale: 100mg = 1 mL, 275mg = 2.75 mL, etc.
- Mix dose with ½ glass of milk or juice (use same type of fluid every time)
- Use only a glass, ceramic or china container **(no styrofoam, plastic or paper cups)** and only a metal spoon to mix **(no plastic spoon or straws)**
- Once opened use within 2 months

