

# Ciclosporin

## Information for patients

### What is ciclosporin?

**Ciclosporin** (trade name: **Neoral**) is a drug used to suppress the immune system. The immune system is usually responsible for fighting infections, but sometimes it is necessary to suppress its action. In conditions such as uveitis, the immune system mistakenly reacts against a part of the body causing inflammation. Ciclosporin works by preventing immune cells from dividing and reproducing quickly, and so reduces the ability of these cells to cause inflammation. Ciclosporin is taken by mouth twice a day.

### Why have I been started on this treatment?

Most patients who use ciclosporin to treat uveitis/scleritis are already using a steroid called prednisolone. In the long term, in large doses, steroids have multiple side effects. Ciclosporin is usually given to improve control of the uveitis/scleritis so that the dose of prednisolone can be reduced.

### What are the risks of the procedure / treatment?

#### 1. The kidneys

Ciclosporin may reduce kidney function but it is used in low doses for the treatment of uveitis so this is unusual. Ciclosporin is not used for those who have pre-existing kidney problems. In the clinic, six weekly checks will be done whilst you are taking this drug.

#### 2. Drug absorption

The amount of drug that is absorbed from the capsule varies from patient to patient, therefore this is monitored by the clinic. Every time you come to the uveitis clinic you should **omit your morning dose**. It may be requested we take a blood test to measure the drug remaining from the previous evening's dose, this is dependent on the patient, and you can take your morning dose after that. There are various formulations of ciclosporin commercially available. **You should always ensure that the pharmacist dispenses Neoral**, not any other tradename drug, as absorption can be different.

#### 3. Blood pressure

Sometimes ciclosporin causes the blood pressure to rise. Your blood pressure will be checked regularly.

#### 4. Infection

Taking ciclosporin causes immune system suppression which makes you more susceptible to some infections; this is particularly important if you are on a high dose of ciclosporin or if you are taking two immune suppressants. Ciclosporin alone, taken in small to moderate doses, is unlikely to lead to infections. Some patients develop viral warts. It is **extremely important** that you tell any doctor planning to give you a vaccine, that you are taking ciclosporin; some vaccines cannot be used. However, it is recommended that you obtain annual influenza vaccination from your GP, and also obtain testing for immunity to pneumococcus, followed by immunisation if necessary.

#### 5. Gums and teeth

In some patients, ciclosporin can cause gum swelling which can lead to tooth decay. It is important to be stringent with dental hygiene and to see your dentist regularly.

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## 6. Taking other tablets

Some drugs interact with ciclosporin. It is extremely important that **you tell any doctor who wishes to prescribe any drug for you, that you are taking ciclosporin**. In particular, drugs containing **aspirin** (including Anadin®) or **ibuprofen** (including Nurofen®) should be avoided.

## 7. Others

If you are a woman planning to have a child, it is important that you discuss this with your doctor before starting ciclosporin. Most pregnancies pass uneventfully but should be monitored carefully.

Any of the following may also occur with ciclosporin:

- headache (especially in those who already suffer from migraine)
- tingling or burning of the hands and feet
- tremors
- palpitations
- nausea
- indigestion
- abdominal cramps
- light-headedness
- tiredness
- loss of libido
- ankle swelling

Ciclosporin tends to make body hair darker and sometimes denser.


Ciclosporin, when used as directed and with proper safety monitoring, is a safe drug. However, it is potent. **There is no drug useful for the treatment of uveitis/scleritis which is entirely free of potential or actual side-effects.**

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Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.



**Further information and advice can be obtained from:**

**NHS 111**  
**NHS Choices online**

 **111**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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**Telephone:**  01622 224960 or  01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

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