

CYCLOSPORIN (NEORAL)

Cyclosporin is an oral medicine, which is very effective in the treatment of psoriasis, dermatitis, and other severe skin eruptions. As with any medication, it is important to take it in the proper fashion. Although Cyclosporin does have side effects like most other medications, if monitored properly, these are usually not a problem.

Cyclosporin was originally developed as a medicine to prevent organ rejection in kidney transplant patients. Patients with psoriasis who needed to take this medicine because of a kidney transplant noticed that their psoriasis improved dramatically. Normally, organ rejection is caused by certain white blood cells known as T cells. Cyclosporin interferes with the action of T cells so that the kidney is not rejected. It also happens that many severe skin diseases are produced by the over action of the same types of T cells. That is why Cyclosporin also helps these conditions. Fortunately to control the skin problems, the dosage of Cyclosporin is much lower than what is normally used in kidney transplantation.

Cyclosporin is a pill, which is taken on a once or twice per day basis. It comes in only one strength so most patients end up taking two to four pills per day based on their body weight. It is best to take cyclosporine before meals since it is better absorbed.

Most patients who take Cyclosporin do not have any side effects. The major possible problem with Cyclosporin is slight worsening of kidney function. This would not be something that would produce symptoms. This would only be found on the basis of a blood test. This is why your blood tests are monitored. Most patients who take Cyclosporin in the dosages required for skin problems do not have any changes in their kidney function.

Other side effects would include a rash if you were allergic to the medication, increased hair growth, some soreness and swelling in the gums, and a slight increase in blood pressure especially if your blood pressure was borderline before hand. You will be monitored for these side effects in the course of your treatment.

Cyclosporin is one of the most effective treatments for various forms of skin disease. Most patients who take this medication do not have any side effects. There can be interactions between Cyclosporin and other medications, which you may or may not be taking. These can raise the levels of the Cyclosporin medication. If you are on any other medicines, please let me know so that these interactions can be checked for.

If you have any other questions regarding this medicine, please ask me before you leave the office.