

Cyclophosphamide

Cytoxan® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Cyclophosphamide is used to treat cancer and some diseases that are caused by an overactive immune system.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Cyclophosphamide is cleared from the body by the liver and kidneys. It should be used very carefully in pets with liver or kidney disease.
- Cyclophosphamide causes the bone marrow to stop producing blood cells and should be used carefully in pets with anemias or those pets on other drugs that suppress the bone marrow. These effects on bone marrow usually occur within 1-2 weeks of treatment and will take about 4 weeks to recover.
- Because cyclophosphamide suppresses the immune system, your pet might be more susceptible to infections while on this medication.
- The effects of cyclophosphamide on the bladder may increase the risk of bladder cancer at a later time.
- Cyclophosphamide may cause birth defects and should not be used during pregnancy.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Cyclophosphamide decreases the ability of the bone marrow to produce blood cells which may result in anemias and increased risk for infection. If your pet shows signs of lack of energy, weakness, infection, bruising or bleeding you should contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Cyclophosphamide can be toxic to the heart at higher doses. Report any irregular heart beats or rates to your veterinarian.
- Cyclophosphamide may cause stomach upset and can be given with food to reduce this side effect.
- Hair loss is common in those breeds of dogs that are continuously growing hair (*e.g.*, Poodles and Old English Sheepdogs).
- Cyclophosphamide may cause bladder irritation. You should leave lots of clean water for your pet to drink and report any signs of blood in the urine or frequent urination to your veterinarian immediately.

How Should It Be Given?

- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose as this can be extremely toxic to your pet.
- As cyclophosphamide can cause immune suppression in humans, you should wear gloves and wash hands after giving this medication.
- You should not split or crush these tablets unless directed by your veterinarian as this might result in an unpredictable amount of drug getting into your pet's blood stream.
- **Dogs and Cats:** Dogs and cats usually get this drug orally 4 days out of 7 for 6-8 weeks in a cancer treatment program. You must take your pet back to the veterinarian frequently for very important blood work checkups.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Cyclophosphamide tablets should be protected from light and moisture and stored at room temperature. Solutions of cyclophosphamide should be stored in the refrigerator and discarded after 14 days.
- Pet owners who are pregnant, breast-feeding or trying to conceive should not handle this medication.
- Any waste from this animal (feces, urine, saliva) should be cleaned up with gloves for at least 48 hours after the last treatment with cyclophosphamide. Waste should be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag.