

## **Cyclophosphamide, SENDOXAN®, SYKLOFOSFAMID® – in the treatment of rheumatic diseases**

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### **Mode of action/Indications**

The function of lymph cells is impaired in some rheumatic diseases. In an attempt to remedy this, so-called immunosuppressive medicines or cytostatics, such as cyclophosphamide, are used. Cyclophosphamide is used for treatment of severe systemic vasculitis (inflammation of blood vessels) and rheumatic diseases of connective tissue. The drug takes effect within 1–3 months.

### **Dosage/method of administration**

Cyclophosphamide is available as 50 mg tablets. The average treatment dose varies from 1.5 to 2.5 mg/kg body weight/day (1–4 tablets/day). The tablets are swallowed whole, preferably an hour before a meal, with plenty of fluid. If there is a lot of stomach irritation, the tablets can also be taken with a meal.

The drug may also be administered intravenously (into a vein) in hospital.

### **Adverse effects**

The most common adverse effects are nausea or hair thinning. Adverse effect on bone marrow may be severe, which is why blood cell counts must be monitored. Susceptibility to infections may increase. Medication must be stopped for the duration of infections with fever.

Other adverse effects that may occur are amenorrhea (absence of menstruation), impaired sperm production and bladder irritation. Treatment is only continued for more than two years in exceptional cases. Drink plenty of water and empty your bladder frequently to minimise bladder irritation.

### **Pregnancy and breastfeeding**

The drug must not be used during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Make sure you use reliable contraception while taking the medication!

The medication must be withdrawn no later than 3 months before a planned pregnancy. This recommendation applies to men as well.

### **Follow-up**

Safety tests are taken after **2-3, 6 and 12 weeks, and then once every 3–6 months**. The results are checked at the health centre. The safety tests include the following: **Basic blood count, B-NEUT and ALT**.

**CREA, U-ChemScr, CRP and ESR** are measured in connection with treatment assessment before doctor's appointment every 6–12 months.

## **Other considerations**

It is recommended that the drug is stopped a week before surgery. The use of the drug may be restarted after 1–2 weeks once the wound has healed. Vaccinations with live attenuated vaccines are not recommended.

**Link** [Reumalääkkeiden ohjeet | Reumatalo.fi | Terveyskylä.fi](#) (in Finnish)

[Wellbeing services county of Satakunta](#)