



## **Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC**

*Dermatologist, specializing in hair loss*

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### **INFORMATION ON CYCLOSPORINE**

#### **What is cyclosporine?**

- Cyclosporine is an immunosuppressant medication.
- It is sometimes used to treat scarring hair loss conditions that haven't responded to other medications.
- Less commonly, Dr. Donovan uses cyclosporine to treat alopecia areata.

#### **Who should not take cyclosporine?**

Dr. Donovan will carefully review if cyclosporine is right for you. Patients with any of the following conditions may or may not be advised to take cyclosporine

1. patients with kidney problems
2. patients with blood pressure problems
3. patients who are allergic to the drug
4. patients with a history of cancers
5. patients on medications that interfere with cyclosporine
6. patients with infections

#### **What is the typical dose?**

- Dr. Donovan will advise what dose to use. Usually the drug is given according to a patient's weight.
- For example, an average male may use upwards of 150 mg twice daily.
- The dose however, will be adjusted according to the age and weight of the patient.

## **What side effects are possible with cyclosporine?**

The following is a partial list of some of the possible side effects. In general, many patients are able to take cyclosporine without side effects. However, it's not possible to predict who will develop these side effects and who will not.

### **Cyclosporine side effects include:**

1. kidney problems
2. high blood pressure
3. neurological problems such as tremor, headaches, pins and needles
4. thickening of the gums (called '*gingival hyperplasia*')
5. increased hair growth on the face or body
6. gastrointestinal problems such as nausea, vomiting and discomfort
7. muscle and joint pains
8. high potassium levels in the blood, low magnesium,
9. high fats and cholesterol in the blood
10. development of gout

### **Are tests needed before starting cyclosporine?**

Yes, baseline blood tests, blood pressure checks and skin exam may be done.

### **Are tests needed after starting cyclosporine?**

Yes, you will be asked to get blood tests frequently after starting cyclosporine and asked to return for blood pressure monitoring frequently.

### **Do some drugs interfere with cyclosporine?**

There is a very, very large list of medications that interact with cyclosporine so be sure to tell Dr. Donovan all the medications you take. This includes simple things like St John's wort used for depression. Cyclosporine can not be used with grapefruit juice.

## Medications that can not be used with Cyclosporine

The following medications interact with cyclosporine. Be sure to tell Dr. Donovan as well as pharmacist if you take these medications and are considering cyclosporine. The following medications may or may not be allowed.

1. anti depressants like SSRI type antidepressants
2. anti-viral drugs (protease inhibitors)
3. anti-fungal medications
4. anti-histamines
5. allopurinol
6. beta blockers
7. calcium channel blockers
8. diuretics
9. birth control pills
10. grapefruit juice
11. rifampin
12. isoniazid
13. anticonvulsants
14. griseofulvin
15. aminoglycoside antibiotics
16. NSAIDS (ibuprofen and other meds)
17. Septra antibiotics
18. Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil)
19. Sulfa drugs
20. ACE inhibitor blood pressure medications
21. Potassium pills
22. Potassium sparing diuretics
23. Digoxin
24. Lovastatin

