MyelomaUK

Cyclophosphamide

AL amyloidosis Treatment Guide

What is cyclophosphamide?

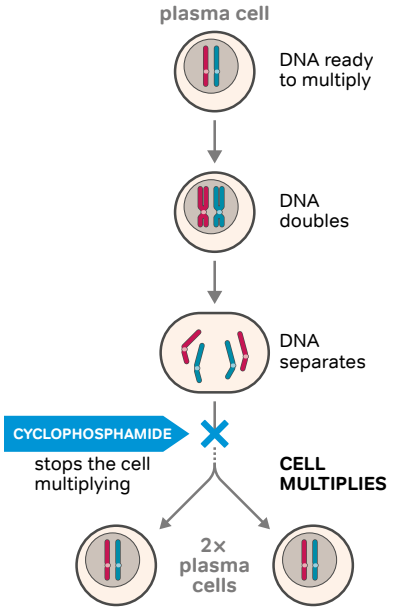
Cyclophosphamide is a chemotherapy drug used in the treatment of AL amyloidosis. It belongs to a class of chemotherapy drugs called alkylating agents.

How does it work?

Treatment for AL amyloidosis aims to kill the abnormal plasma cells. This prevents more amyloid being produced and enables the body to clear existing deposits gradually.

DNA is the genetic makeup of cells. It carries the instructions for cells and how they function.

Cyclophosphamide works by damaging the DNA within the abnormal plasma cells. Damaging the DNA stops the abnormal plasma cells multiplying and results in their death.



Cyclophosphamide damaging the DNA of the abnormal plasma cells, resulting in their death

How is cyclophosphamide given?

Cyclophosphamide can be given by mouth (orally) or into a vein (intravenously). It is most often given as tablets.

Cyclophosphamide is often given in combination with other AL amyloidosis treatments.

Cyclophosphamide is usually given every day. Individual treatment plans vary. Your healthcare team will discuss your specific plan.

Possible side effects

Cyclophosphamide has a number of possible side effects which can vary from patient to patient. You will experience some side effects, but it is unlikely you will experience them all. Most side effects will ease once treatment has finished. Always report any side effects to your healthcare team as soon as possible so they can be treated quickly.

Side effects of cyclophosphamide are more common in the parts of the body where there are rapidly dividing cells, for example the hair follicles, bone marrow, skin, and the lining of the mouth and gut.

The side effects listed here are those experienced most often. For a complete list of side effects please refer to the patient information leaflet which is included in the pack with the treatment. If you do not have this, ask your healthcare team for it.

Myeloma UK provides a wide range of information booklets about side effects and their management. Relevant booklets are signposted beneath each side effect on the following pages.

You can find these along with all of our information booklets online at **myeloma.org.uk/library**.

You can also find out more about the management of these side effects by asking your healthcare team or by contacting Myeloma UK.

0800 980 3332 **AskTheNurse@myeloma.org.uk**

myeloma.org.uk

Anaemia and bleeding

Cyclophosphamide can decrease the number of red blood cells, called anaemia. Symptoms include: looking pale, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Cyclophosphamide can also decrease the number of platelets, increasing your risk of bleeding or bruising. You may be given treatment for these side effects and to boost your blood cell counts.

For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Sore mouth and throat

Cyclophosphamide can cause pain and inflammation of the mouth and throat, called mucositis. This can make eating and drinking difficult. You may need intravenous fluids and nutritional supplements until you are able to eat and drink normally. You may also be offered mouthwashes and painkillers to ease any pain.

For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Risk of infection

Cyclophosphamide may reduce the number of white blood cells, increasing your risk of infection. Common signs include: high or low temperature (37.5°C or above, or below 36°C), feeling shivery or cold, peeing (passing urine) more often or pain when peeing, and cough or cold symptoms.

Contact your healthcare team or out of hours service immediately if you think you have an infection. Infections can become serious if not treated quickly.

For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Nausea and vomiting

Cyclophosphamide may cause nausea or vomiting. You may be given anti-sickness (anti-emetic) medicine to prevent or reduce nausea and vomiting. You must take them as prescribed rather than waiting until you feel sick. There are several types of anti-sickness medicine and if the one you have is not effective, ask to try another.

For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Effects on fertility

Cyclophosphamide may affect your fertility and ability to have a child. Talk to your healthcare team about how this may affect you and what your options are. Cyclophosphamide may also bring on an early menopause.

For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Bladder problems

Cyclophosphamide can cause inflammation of the bladder. This is called cystitis. You may experience pain when peeing or see blood in your pee. You should drink plenty of water to help prevent this. You may also be offered a medicine called mesna to help protect the bladder.

> Contact your healthcare team or out of hours service if you notice blood in your pee.

Hair thinning or loss

You may have some thinning of your hair. Thinning or loss of your hair usually starts within 2 to 4 weeks of your first dose of cyclophosphamide. You may also have thinning or loss of eyelashes, eyebrows, and other body hair.

Hair thinning or loss is nearly always temporary and your hair should start to grow back around a month after finishing treatment. Try to avoid hair dyes and use a mild shampoo to avoid scalp irritation.

> For more information see the **AL amyloidosis: Your essential guide** from Myeloma UK.

Heart problems

Cyclophosphamide can cause heart problems and changes to the way your heart beats. You should report any more noticeable heartbeats or changes in your heartbeat to your healthcare team.

> Call 999 if you experience any severe chest pain or tightness.

Important information about cyclophosphamide

It is important that you follow the instructions for taking cyclophosphamide as prescribed. If you are sick shortly after taking it or if you miss a dose, you should contact your healthcare team immediately for advice before taking the next dose.

You should not have grapefruit or grapefruit juice while taking cyclophosphamide as it may worsen side effects.

You must not take cyclophosphamide during pregnancy, as it is expected to be harmful to the baby. You must use effective contraception while on this treatment, and for 1 year after treatment has finished, if you or your partner could become pregnant.

You should not breastfeed when taking cyclophosphamide as it is not known if it can pass to the milk.

Supplements or herbal medicines that have not been prescribed by your haematologist may cause harm when taken alongside your prescribed treatment.

You must speak to your healthcare team before taking any kind of supplement or alternative treatment, including herbal, traditional, or natural medicines and remedies, and vitamins or wellbeing supplements, to ensure it is safe to do so.

If you have any questions about your treatment, speak to your healthcare team. They are the best people to ask if you have questions about your individual situation. The information in this publication is not meant to replace their advice.

AL amyloidosis Treatment Guide:
Cyclophosphamide

MyelomaUK

We're here for everything a diagnosis of AL amyloidosis brings

Get in touch to find out more about how we can support you

Call the Myeloma UK Infoline on
0800 980 3332

Email Ask the Nurse at
AskTheNurse@myeloma.org.uk

Visit our website at
myeloma.org.uk/al-amy

Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

Myeloma UK
22 Logie Mill, Beaverbank Business Park,
Edinburgh EH7 4HG
0131 557 3332
myelomauk@myeloma.org.uk
Registered Charity No: SC026116

Published by:	Myeloma UK
First published:	August 2019
Last updated:	February 2026
Next review due:	February 2029

We appreciate your feedback

Please fill in a short online survey about our patient information at **myeloma.org.uk/pifeedback** or email any comments to **patientinfo@myeloma.org.uk**

For a list of references used to develop our resources, visit **myeloma.org.uk/references**