

Cyclophosphamide is a medication that is commonly used in the treatment of various autoimmune diseases and cancers. It belongs to the class of drugs known as alkylating agents, which work by disrupting the DNA of rapidly dividing cells, including cancer cells and cells of the immune system.

One of the conditions for which cyclophosphamide is frequently prescribed is vasculitis, an autoimmune disease that causes inflammation of blood vessels. This medication works by suppressing the immune system and reducing the inflammation that leads to blood vessel damage.

While cyclophosphamide can be very effective at treating vasculitis and other autoimmune diseases, it can also cause some serious side effects.

One of the most significant risks associated with cyclophosphamide use is an increased risk of developing bladder cancer. This risk is particularly high in people who receive high doses of the drug or who take it for an extended period of time. To help mitigate this risk, doctors may prescribe a medication called Mesna, which can protect the bladder from the harmful effects of cyclophosphamide.

Another potential side effect of cyclophosphamide is infertility. This medication can cause damage to the ovaries or testes, making it difficult or impossible to conceive a child. If you are receiving cyclophosphamide and are concerned about your fertility, talk to your doctor about options for preserving your eggs or sperm. They may recommend a procedure called cryopreservation, which involves freezing your reproductive cells for future use.

Despite the risks associated with cyclophosphamide, this medication can be life-saving for people with vasculitis and other autoimmune diseases. Your doctor will carefully weigh the potential benefits and risks of this medication before prescribing it to you, and will monitor you closely while you are taking it.

It is important to follow all of your doctor's instructions regarding how to take cyclophosphamide, and to report any side effects or concerns promptly.