Cyproterone - an anti-androgen for men (Cyprostat, Androcur)

Take cyproterone tablets with a drink of water and something to eat. Cyproterone may make you feel tired or weak. If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines. Cyproterone can affect the way your liver works and the way your adrenal glands work. Your doctor will discuss the risk of these with you before you start the treatment.

About cyproterone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>Anti-androgen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>To treat prostate cancer in men; to control hypersexuality in men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Cyprostat® (used for prostate cancer); Androcur® (used for hypersexuality)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Tablets</td>
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Cyproterone belongs to a group of medicines known as anti-androgens. This means that it blocks the actions of male sex hormones called androgens, and it also reduces the amount of male hormones your body produces. This anti-androgen action can be helpful in the treatment of two different conditions - in the treatment of prostate cancer, and to control the sex drive in men with hypersexuality.

In prostate cancer, the cancer cells need the male hormone testosterone to grow and multiply well. Hormone treatments like cyproterone block the effect of testosterone on prostate cancer cells. This slows down the growth of the cancer. Cyproterone also helps to reduce symptom ‘flares’ and side-effects from other treatments which may be used for the cancer, or following surgery.

In men who have hypersexuality, cyproterone is used to control sexual desire or deviation. If you are prescribed cyproterone for this reason, your doctor will ask you to sign an agreement before you start the treatment.

Cyproterone is also found in very low doses in a contraceptive tablet called co-cyprindiol. It is useful for managing acne or excess hair growth (hirsutism) whilst also providing contraception.

Before taking cyproterone

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking cyproterone it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are under 18 years old. Cyproterone is not recommended for this age group.
- If you are depressed.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or if you drink a lot of alcohol.
- If you have diabetes.
- If you have blood vessel problems, such as if you have ever had a blood clot in a leg or lung.
- If you have a type of anaemia known as sickle cell anaemia.
- If you have ever had a type of brain tumour called meningioma, or if you have been diagnosed with another type of cancer (other than prostate cancer if that is what you are being treated for).
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take cyproterone

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about cyproterone and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
Take cyproterone exactly as your doctor tells you to. How you should take the tablets will depend on what condition you are being treated for, so your doctor will give you full directions. Your dose will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you about what the doctor said to you.

- Take your doses with a snack, or just after eating a meal. Swallow the tablets with a drink of water.
- Try to take cyproterone at the same times of day each day. This will help you to remember to take your doses regularly.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless your next dose is due. If it is nearly time for your next dose then take the next dose when it is due but leave out the forgotten dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Please keep your regular appointments with your doctor. Your doctor will want you to have some blood tests both before and during your treatment. The tests will check the levels of your blood cells, and that your liver stays healthy. Your doctor will also want to check that your adrenal glands are not being affected by the treatment.
- Cyproterone can make you feel tired or weak. If this happens to you, do not drive and do not use tools or machines, as these symptoms may put others as well as yourself at risk.
- Your doctor may recommend you do not drink alcohol while you are on cyproterone. This is because regularly drinking alcohol can stop cyproterone from working as well as it should.
- When you have been taking cyproterone for some weeks, your sperm count will reduce and you are likely to become unable to father a child. You must not, however, rely on cyproterone as a contraceptive. Although this infertility is likely to reverse when you stop taking cyproterone, you should speak with your doctor if you are thinking of having children in the future.

Can cyproterone cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with cyproterone. You will find a full list in the manufacturer’s information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common cyproterone side-effects</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced sperm count</td>
<td>Your doctor will discuss this with you before your treatment starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tired or weary</td>
<td>If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot flushes and sweating</td>
<td>Try to keep yourself cool by wearing light and airy clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in your weight, feeling depressed or restless, breast tenderness, feeling short of breath</td>
<td>If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor</td>
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**Important**: cyproterone can affect the way your liver works and the way your adrenal glands work. Your doctor will discuss this with your before you start the treatment, but it is important you tell your doctor if you develop any of the following:

- Any yellowing of your skin or of the whites of your eyes, or if you develop any stomach discomfort or pain that does not go away quickly. These can be signs that your liver is being affected.
- If you feel very tired, start losing your appetite or weight, develop diarrhoea or sickness (vomiting), or if you feel particularly irritable or depressed. These can be signs that your adrenal glands are being affected.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store cyproterone

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Do not give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you are due to have an operation or dental treatment, please tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with your other medicines.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Further reading & references

- Manufacturer's PIL, Cyprostat® 100 mg tablets; Bayer plc, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2017.

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