Cyclosporine-Oral
(Sandimmune, Neoral, Atopica)

Common Drug Name
Cyclosporine

Common Brand Names
Sandimmune, Neoral, Atopica

Generic products are available.

Storage
Store at room temperature (70-77°F), in a tight, light resistant, childproof container. Protect from freezing and do not refrigerate. If the oral suspension or noncompounded capsules are stored at less than 68°F, they may gel. If this occurs, allow to warm to room temperature. Shake the oral liquid before using. After opening the oral liquid, use it within 2 months. If the capsules come in a foil blister pack, do not open the pack until ready to use.

Uses
Cyclosporine suppresses the immune system and is used to treat immune-mediated diseases, especially those involving the blood or skin. It may also be used in the treatment of anal fistulas in dogs, asthma in cats, and to prevent rejection of transplanted organs. One brand, Atopica, is approved for use to treat atopy (allergy to inhaled substances.)

Dose and Administration
IMPORTANT: Always follow the dosage instructions provided by your veterinarian. If you have difficulty giving the medication, contact your veterinarian.

Give this medication without food. If side effects related to the digestive system are observed, contact your veterinarian, who may direct you to give the medication with a small amount of food.

Cyclosporine is bitter. Do not open the capsules and attempt to give the contents by sprinkling on the food.

If you miss a dose, give it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to the regular schedule. Do not give 2 doses at once.

This medication should only be given to the pet for whom it was prescribed.

Possible Side Effects
May see loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. More rarely, may see overgrowth of the gums, loss of appetite, muscle cramps, and increased hair growth. Contact your veterinarian if you notice any of the above signs.

At high doses, immune system suppression may occur, making a pet more susceptible to infection. Contact your veterinarian if your pet has a fever (over 103°F), painful urination, tiredness, sneezing, coughing, or runny eyes.

If your pet experiences an allergic reaction to the medication, signs may include facial swelling, hives, scratching, sudden onset of diarrhea, vomiting, shock, seizures, pale gums, cold limbs, or coma. If you observe any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Precautions
Not for use in animals hypersensitive (allergic) to it or other ingredients.

Use with caution in animals with kidney or liver disease.

Do not use in breeding or pregnant animals. If the mother is receiving cyclosporine, place the offspring on milk replacer after they have received the colostrum (first milk immediately after birth).

There are two brands of the oral liquid form (Sandimmune and Neoral). They are not the same strength, so one should not be substituted for the other.

Cyclosporine is inactivated by some plastics. Do not leave the medication in plastic cups or syringes for a long time or it may lose its effectiveness.

Cyclosporine can become toxic if its level in the blood becomes too high. Consult with your veterinarian regarding the physical examinations and laboratory testing necessary prior to and during treatment with cyclosporine.

Drug, Food, and Test Interactions
Consult your veterinarian before using cyclosporine-oral with vitamins and supplements, digoxin, etoposide, and corticosteroids, amiodarone, androgens (testosterone), azole antifungals (ketoconazole, itraconazole), erythromycin, calcium channel blockers (diltiazem), corticosteroids, metoclopramide trimethoprim/sulfa, rifampin, phenobarbital, phenytoin, terbinafine, probucol, omeprazole aminoglycosides (e.g., gentamicin) or amphotericin, vaccines, or modified live vaccines, since interactions may occur.

Signs of Toxicity/Overdose
May see loss of appetite, increased thirst, increased urination, jaundice (yellowing of gums, skin, or eyes), vomiting, or lethargy.

If you know or suspect your pet has had an overdose, or if you observe any of these signs in your pet, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Keep this and all other medications out of the reach of children and pets.