

Treatments & Side Effects

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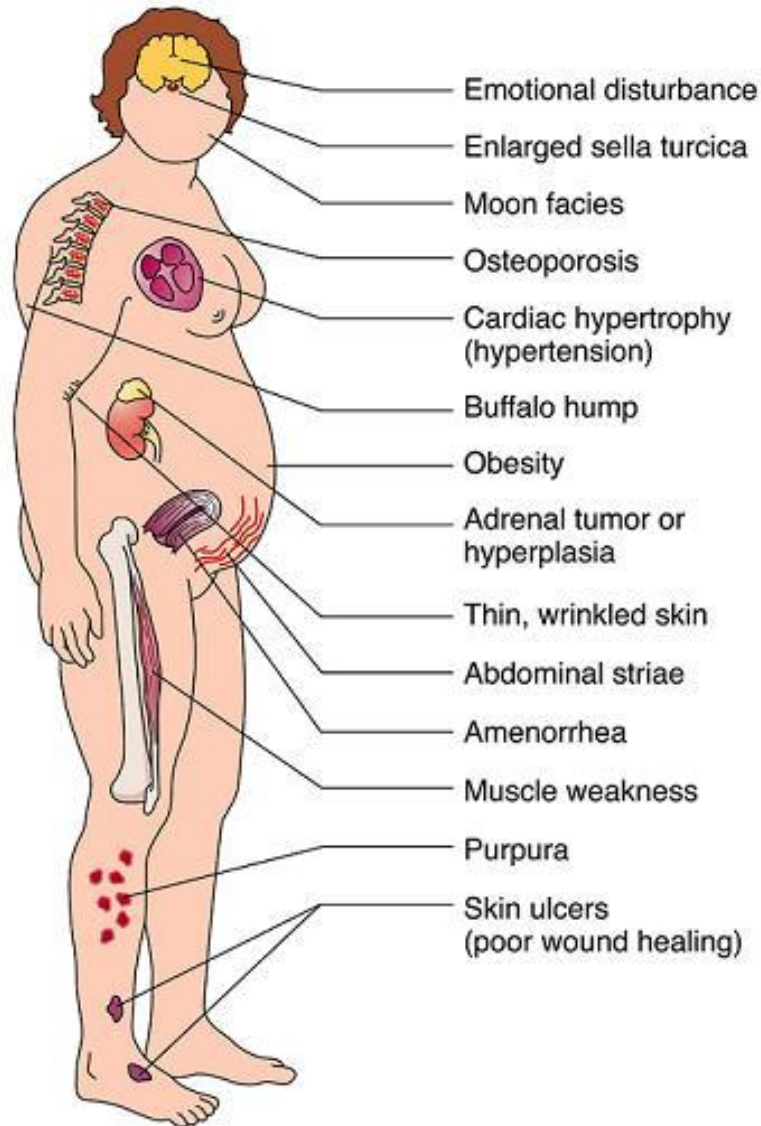
Treatment

- Induction
 - Aim is to get disease to go away
 - Stop all inflammation and further damage
- Maintenance
 - Stop disease from coming back

Steroids

- AKA prednisolone, hydrocortisone, methylprednisolone, glucocorticoids

Steroids: Side effects



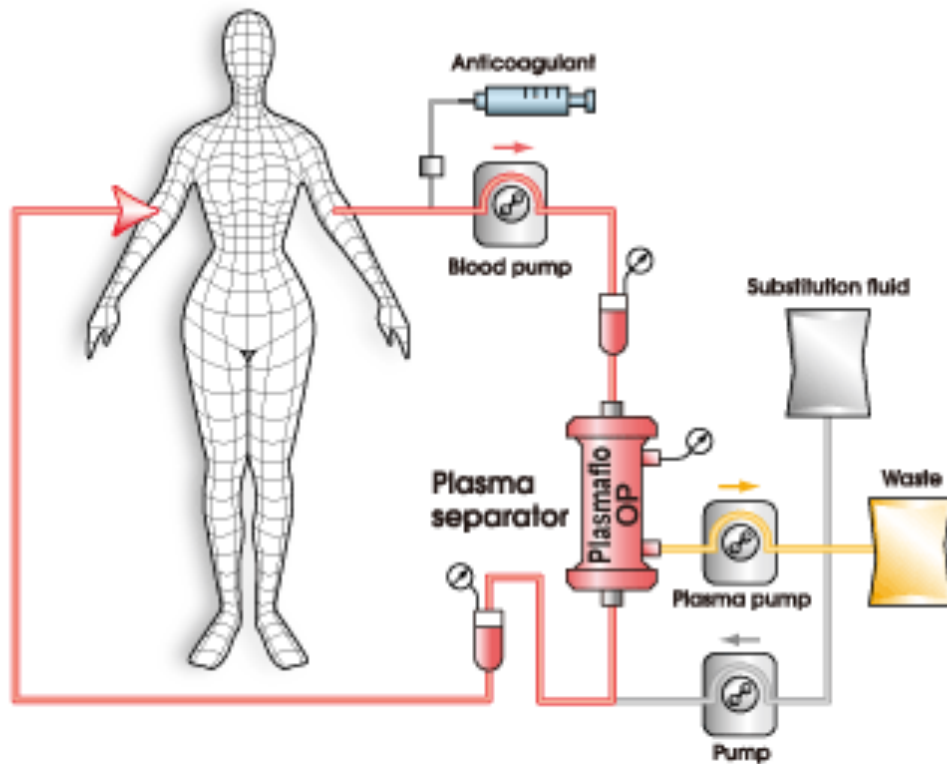
Diabetes
Glaucoma
Cataracts
Insomnia
Slow growth (children)
Thrush

Steroids

- Key drug in treatment
 - Rapid control of inflammation
- Aim to reduce relatively quickly
 - Steroids are main cause of early infections

Plasma exchange

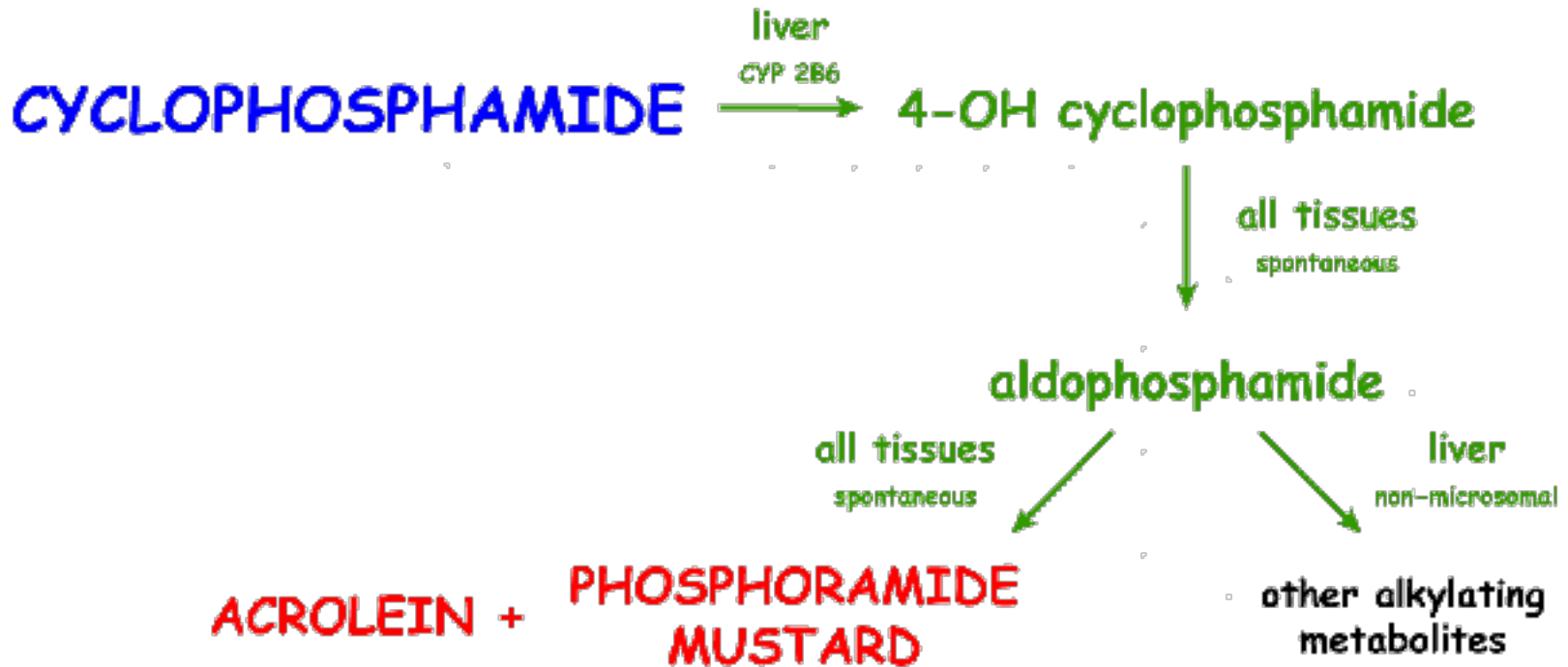
Plasma Exchange (PE) treatment diagram



Plasma exchange

- Removes antibodies (ANCA) and replaces with healthy plasma
- Need to insert a cannula into a large vein
- Main risks are infection, increased risk of bleeding and low calcium

Cyclophosphamide



Damages DNA causing cell death

Cyclophosphamide

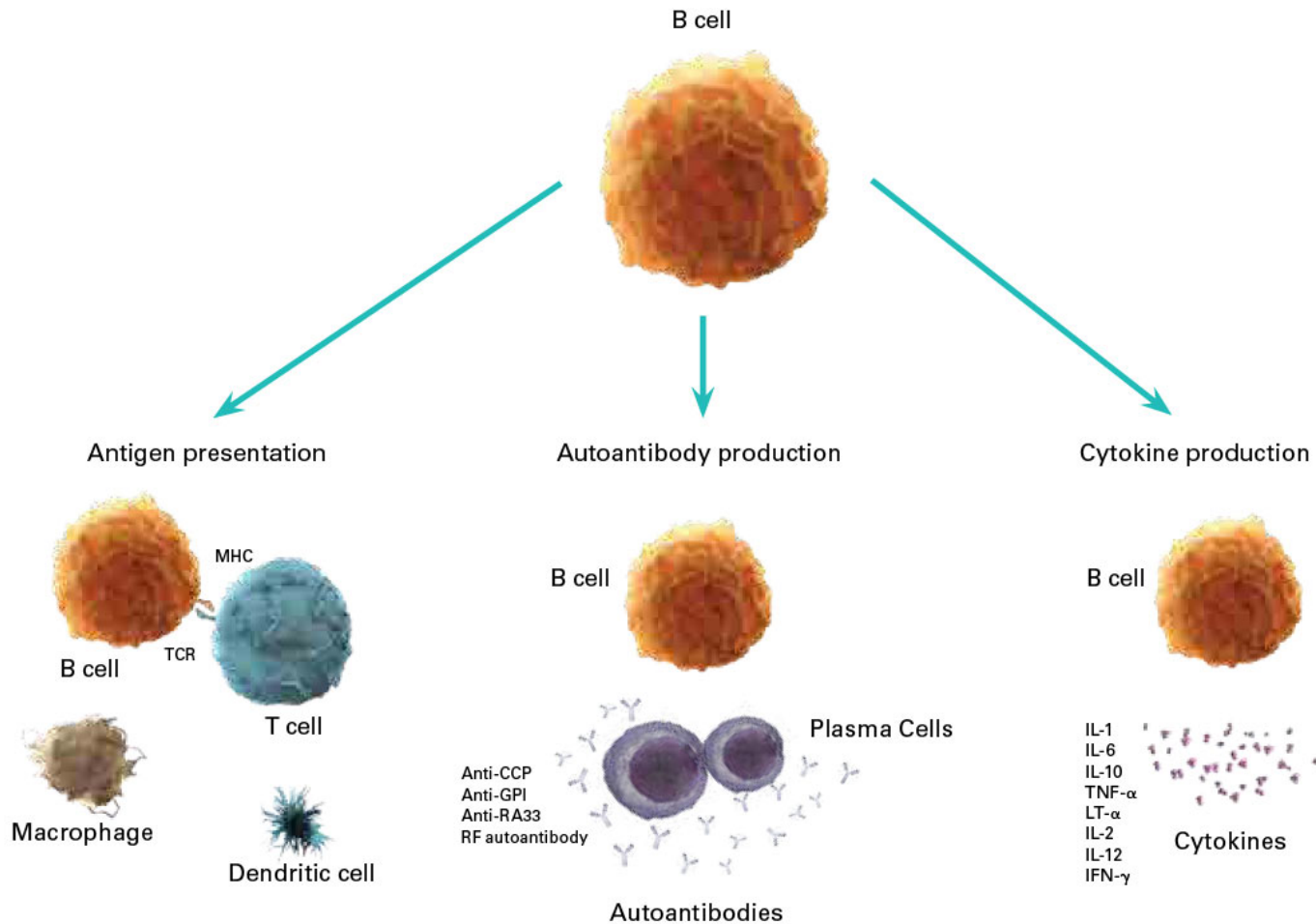
- Can be given either orally or as an IV pulse
- IV pulse gives less cyclophosphamide

Cyclophosphamide: Side effects

- Nausea, vomiting
- Temporary hairloss
- Infections
- Low blood cell count
- Infertility
- Cancers
 - Bladder cancer
 - Other cancers

Rituximab

Humanised mouse antibody that kills your B cells



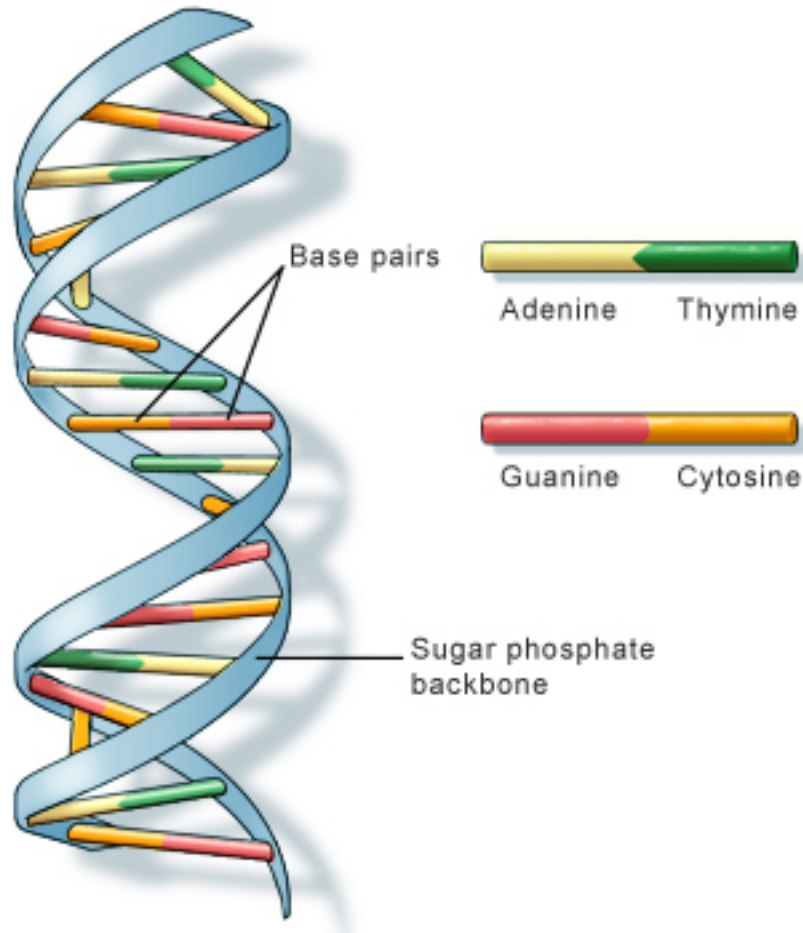
Rituximab: Side effects

- Allergic reaction
- Increased risk of reactivating hepatitis viruses
- May increase risk of other viral infections
- Some patients have reduced level of antibodies (hypogammaglobulinemia)

Rituximab

- Shown to be equivalent to cyclophosphamide
- Very useful if disease relapses
- Well tolerated

Azathioprine



Our genes are made of DNA which go on to make all the building blocks of life

Azathioprine reduces production of DNA

Azathioprine: Side effects

- Hepatitis
- Low blood count, infections
- Long-term increased risk of cancer

Methotrexate

- Inhibits the vitamin folic acid which is needed to make DNA
- Most patients have to take folic acid with it

Mycophenolate mofetil

- An alternative to azathioprine
- Works in similar way
- Side effects
 - Diarrhoea

Methotrexate: Side effects

- Lung scarring
 - Stop if you notice worsening breathlessness
- Liver scarring
 - Regular tests of liver function
- Low blood counts

Summary

- Drugs are powerful but effective
 - Most patients will go into remission
- Side effects are well known
 - Careful monitoring requiring
 - Aim for lowest dose to control disease
 - Most patients are able to stop drugs but disease may recur