THE LUNG CENTER
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PATIENT INFORMATION for NAC

(N-Acetylcysteine or NAC)

WHY IS THIS MEDICATION BEING USED?

NAC is an antioxidant. In the process of pulmonary fibrosis, it is suspected that OXIDANTS are made in excess. When fluid levels from the lungs are studied, a low level of glutathione is observed. Glutathione is needed to make antioxidants and to restore the antioxidants in the lungs. NAC helps to improve the low levels of glutathione in the lungs.

WHAT IS THE COST OF THE MEDICATION?

A prescription is not needed for NAC. This medication can be purchased at nutrition stores, like GNC. The usual cost is around $30 per month.

WHAT IS THE DOSE?

The dose is 600mg three times per day. This is a tablet that is taken by mouth.

NAC is usually used along with another medication (combination therapy).

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

NAC is well tolerated. Side effects can include nausea, vomiting, and other digestive complaints. Rash, with or without fever, is a rare side effect. You should call your doctor if these symptoms occur.

HOW WILL I KNOW THIS MEDICATION IS WORKING?

NAC does not work right away. You may have to be on this medication for at least 3-6 months. Pulmonary function testing, x-rays and examination may all determine how you are responding to the medication. If you show benefit from NAC, you can expect to remain on the medication for one year. Lifelong therapy is necessary for some patients.