



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Hydroxychloroquine

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Plaquenil

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Hydroxyquine; MINT-Hydroxychloroquine; MYLAN-Hydroxychloroquine [DSC]; Plaquenil; PRO-Hydroxychloroquine-200 [DSC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent malaria.
- It is used to treat lupus.
- It is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has had any eye changes or changes in eyesight due to this drug or drugs like this one.
- If your child has psoriasis, talk with the doctor.
- If your child has porphyria.
- If your child is taking cimetidine.

- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of his/her drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

For all uses of this drug:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- A severe eye problem has happened with this drug. This may lead to lasting eyesight problems. The risk may be higher if your child has some types of eye or kidney problems. The risk may also be higher with some doses of this drug, if your child uses this drug for longer than 5 years, or if your child takes certain other drugs like tamoxifen. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has eyesight changes like blurred or foggy eyesight, trouble focusing or reading, or trouble seeing in dim light. Call your child's doctor right away if your child loses part of his/her eyesight, sees dark spots, or sees only part of an object.
- Get your child an eye exam as you have been told by the doctor.
- Be careful if your child has G6PD deficiency. Anemia may happen.
- Have your child's blood work checked if he/she is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- This drug may make your child sunburn more easily. Use care if your child will be in the sun. Tell your child's doctor if your child sunburns easily while taking this drug.
- Low blood sugar has happened with this drug. Sometimes, this has been very

bad and could be life-threatening. Talk with the doctor.

- Have your child's blood sugar checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- A severe and sometimes deadly reaction has happened. Most of the time, this reaction has signs like fever, rash, or swollen glands with problems in body organs like the liver, kidney, blood, heart, muscles and joints, or lungs. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Keep away from children. Accidental exposure may cause death. If a child takes this drug by accident, get medical help right away.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.

Preventing malaria:

- Other measures are needed along with this drug including using screens, bed netting, insect repellent (10% to 35% DEET), and permethrin spray on clothing and nets. Avoid spraying most insect repellents on children. Lower evening and night-time outdoor activity.
- If your child is pregnant and is traveling to a malaria-infested place, talk to the doctor about the risks first.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered,

or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of low blood sugar like dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, shaking, a fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating.
- Seizures.
- Mood changes.
- If your child is planning to harm him/herself. If the want to harm him/herself gets worse.
- Bad dreams.
- Ringing in the ears, hearing loss, or any other changes in hearing.
- Change in balance.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Shakiness.
- Muscle weakness.
- Not able to control eye movements.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or if your child feels very tired or weak.
- Heart problems like heart failure and a certain abnormal heartbeat (prolonged QT interval) have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these heart problems have been deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fast or abnormal heartbeat; very bad dizziness or passing out; or shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- A very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause very bad health problems that may not

go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in the mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

Preventing malaria:

- Fever that happens while in or after coming back from the malaria area.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Not hungry.
- Weight loss.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Change in color of skin.
- Change in color of hair.
- Hair loss.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Give this drug with food or milk.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.
- Do not give antacids or kaolin within 4 hours of this drug.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect from light.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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