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Hydroxychloroquine tablets (Quinoric)

Swallow hydroxychloroquine tablets with a meal or a glass of milk.

Do not take indigestion remedies within four hours (before or after) of taking hydroxychloroquine.

Store hydroxychloroquine safely out of the reach and sight of children. It is harmful in overdose or if ingested accidentally by children.

About hydroxychloroquine

Type of medicine	Disease-modifying antirheumatic drug (DMARD)
Used for	Rheumatoid arthritis; juvenile arthritis; systemic and discoid lupus erythematosus; and skin conditions caused or aggravated by sunlight
Also called	Hydroxychloroquine sulfate; Quinoric®
Available as	Tablets

Hydroxychloroquine is used to treat a number of different inflammatory conditions, including [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [juvenile arthritis](#), and lupus erythematosus ([systemic lupus erythematosus \(SLE\)](#) and discoid erythematosus). These are all autoimmune diseases. This means that your immune system, which normally protects your body from infections, mistakenly attacks itself. This causes pain and damage to parts of your body, particularly your joints or skin. Hydroxychloroquine suppresses the immune reaction, and this helps to reduce the damage caused.

Before taking hydroxychloroquine

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 hydroxychloroquine it is important that your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have any problems with your kidneys or liver.
- If you have any problems with your heart or your blood.
- If you have epilepsy.
- If you have problems with your eyes or eyesight, except for long- or short-sightedness.
- If you have a problem with your stomach or intestines (a gastrointestinal problem).
- If you have a skin disorder called psoriasis, or a condition causing muscle weakness (called myasthenia gravis), as these conditions can be made worse by hydroxychloroquine.
- If you know you have glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. This is an inherited disorder which causes problems after eating some foods, such as fava beans.
- If you have a rare inherited blood disorder called porphyria.
- If you are taking 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 hydroxychloroquine

- Before you start this treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside your pack. The leaflet will give you more information about treatment with hydroxychloroquine and a full list of side-effects which you may experience from taking it.

- It is important that you take hydroxychloroquine exactly as your doctor tells you to. You may be prescribed one or two tablets to take each day. Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you which is right for you. Your dose will also be printed on the label of the pack to remind you.
- Take the tablets at a mealtime, or alternatively swallow them with a glass of milk. This will help to stop you feeling queasy afterwards, as hydroxychloroquine may irritate your stomach. Do not crush or chew the tablets.
- If you take a medicine for indigestion (such as an antacid), do not take it within the four hours before you take hydroxychloroquine, or within the four hours afterwards. This is because antacids interfere with the way hydroxychloroquine is absorbed by your body, making it less effective.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if when you remember, it is nearly time for your next dose then leave out the forgotten dose. Do not take two doses together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. Your doctor is likely to check your vision before you start this treatment, and advise that you have an eye test once every year. This is because hydroxychloroquine can affect your eyesight when taken over a long period of time. If you notice any changes in your eyesight (such as your vision becoming blurred), you should inform your doctor as soon as possible.
- If you have been prescribed hydroxychloroquine for skin problems worsened by sunlight, you will be advised to take it only during the periods when you are exposed to bright sunlight.

- For conditions other than skin problems caused by sunlight, you may need to take hydroxychloroquine for several weeks before you start to notice an improvement in your condition. It can take several months before you feel the full benefit of the treatment. Continue to take the tablets regularly even when you start to feel better. If you stop before your doctor advises, your condition may worsen again. If, however, you feel no better after taking it for six months, you should discuss this with your doctor, as a different medicine may be more suitable for you.
- If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take with hydroxychloroquine.
- Hydroxychloroquine may stop the oral typhoid vaccine from working. If you are having any vaccinations, make sure the person treating you knows that you are taking this medicine.

Can hydroxychloroquine 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 hydroxychloroquine. 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.

Common hydroxychloroquine side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling sick (nausea), stomach pain, loss of appetite, diarrhoea	Remember to take the tablets after food or with a drink of milk. Stick to simple foods - avoid spicy or rich meals
Headache	Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the headaches continue, speak with your doctor
Eye problems (for example, blurred vision or sensitivity to light)	If this happens, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until your eyesight returns to normal. Let your doctor know about this as soon as possible
Skin rash or itching	If this becomes troublesome, speak with your doctor

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to this medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

How to store hydroxychloroquine

- Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children. Hydroxychloroquine is harmful if ingested accidentally or if an overdose is taken. If this happens, get medical advice straightaway.
- 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 at once. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

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

If you are having an operation or any dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

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.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Hydroxychloroquine sulfate 200 mg film-coated Tablets](#); Zentiva, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated February 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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