
Treatment Information

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil)

Hydroxychloroquine is an effective treatment for inflammatory arthritis. It was originally developed for use as an anti-malarial treatment. It is not a painkiller and you may need to take an anti-inflammatory drug or painkiller as well as the hydroxychloroquine. Hydroxychloroquine is also known by the trade name **Plaquenil**.

The tablets

Hydroxychloroquine tablets are orange and come in one strength of 200mg. The normal dose is 1 tablet daily. You should take the tablets with food to reduce the risk of side effects.

How long will it take to work?

It may take several weeks before you feel any benefit and you should continue to take your other medication as advised.

Are there any side effects?

As with all medication some people may experience side effects. Serious side effects are uncommon. High doses over several years can occasionally affect the eye and you should stop Hydroxychloroquine and seek medical advice if you have any problems with your sight.

Other side effects include:

- Diarrhoea
- Rash
- Hair loss
- Nausea
- Headache

What tests will I have?

Eye tests: A simple eye check will be performed when you start taking hydroxychloroquine. Please bring your glasses with you when you attend for an appointment. You should report any problems with your sight as soon as they occur.

Does hydroxychloroquine affect pregnancy?

Do not take hydroxychloroquine during pregnancy as this may harm the unborn child. If you are planning a family or wish to breastfeed, you should seek advice from the rheumatology follow - up clinic.

Rheumatology department Patient Information

Other precautions:

You should see your doctor if you develop any signs of infection.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

Poole

BH15 2JB

Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice