HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE (for rheumatoid arthritis)

hye-drox-ee-klor-oh-kwin

What does it do?

Hydroxychloroquine is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart, kidney, blood, muscle or hearing problems, vision or eye problems, or have diabetes, psoriasis, or G6PD deficiency.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

How should you take it?

Take *hydroxychloroquine* regularly as directed. Take it with food and a glass of water.

What if you forget a dose?

If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Reduced number of blood cells that fight infections or help your blood to clot - symptoms include: fever, chills, sore throat or generally feeling unwell, or easy or unusual bruising or bleeding Changes in vision Hearing loss, ringing in the ears Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes Muscle weakness	Tell your doctor immediately
Skin rash, itching Low blood sugar: symptoms may include sweating, trembling, feeling anxious or irritable Stomach upset	Tell your doctor

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- *Hydroxychloroquine* may affect your eyes. You will need an eye test in your first year of treatment, and another one after 5 years (unless your doctor decides you need one sooner). After 5 years of treatment you will need to have an eye test every year. Wear sunglasses when in bright sunlight.
- Protect yourself from too much sunlight while being treated with *hydroxychloroquine*. Always cover up and apply a thick layer of broad spectrum sunscreen (at least SPF 30) when outside. Do not use sunbeds.