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HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE (PLAQUENIL)

What is hydroxychloroquine?

- This medication is sometimes known by its popular trade name “Plaquenil”
- Hydroxychloroquine is an anti-inflammatory medication used to treat various forms of autoimmune hair loss such as lichen planopilaris, frontal fibrosing alopecia and discoid lupus.
- You might hear this referred to as “anti malarial” pill because certain closely related medications (i.e. chloroquine) are actually used to treat [malaria](#) infections in some parts of the world.

Who should not take hydroxychloroquine?

Hydroxychloroquine is not the right treatment for all patients. It is important that anyone using this medication be monitored by a physician knowledgeable about the medication.

Patients with the following medical conditions are sometimes not advised to take this medication:

- patients with allergy to this drug or family of drugs
- patients with certain eye diseases
- female patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- patients with myasthenia gravis
- patients with G6PD deficiency
- patients with mental illness, including psychotic illness
- patients with the skin condition psoriasis

What is the typical dosage of hydroxychloroquine?

Dr. Donovan will guide you about the exact dose to take. Many patients take a 200 mg tablet twice daily but this dose may not be proper for all patients. The amount to take depends on your weight and the activity of your disease.

What are the side effects of hydroxychloroquine?

Speak to Dr Donovan about all possible side effects so you can decide if this medication is right for you. Side effects include:

- eye changes, including vision changes (eye exams are essential while on this medication)
- lowering of blood counts (red cells, white cells and /or platelets)
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- neurological problems, including change in mood, mood swings, irritability, psychosis, headaches,
- skin color/ skin pigmentation changes
- worsening of one's existing psoriasis (if they have psoriasis)
- allergic reactions

What blood tests are needed when once begins hydroxychloroquine?

- Blood tests may be ordered by Dr. Donovan at the onset of treatment and then monthly for the first 3 months.
- You will need to get an eye examination within the first few months of starting and then every 6-12 months while on therapy. Eye changes can occur while on this medication so be sure to speak to your eye physician about all the eye side effects that are possible.

