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INFORMATION ON HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE (PLAQUENIL)

What is hydroxychloroquine?

- This drug, also referred to by a popular brand name “Plaquenil”, is a type of anti-inflammatory medication
- It used to treat some types of hair loss such as lichen planopilaris, pseudopelade, discoid lupus and frontal fibrosing alopecia.
- It is classified as an “anti-malarial” pill because certain closely related medications (i.e. chloroquine) are actually used to treat malaria infections in some parts of the world. Therefore some physicians will refer to this medication simply as an anti-malarial.

Who should not take hydroxychloroquine?

Dr. Donovan will review if this medication is right for you. Patients with the following issues may or may not be recommended to take this medication:

1. patients allergic to the drug or the family of drugs
2. patients with some types of eye diseases
3. patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding
4. patients with myasthenia gravis
5. patients with G6PD deficiency
6. patients with psychotic illness
7. patients with psoriasis

What is the typical dose?

Dr. Donovan will review with you what dose is right for you.

- Many patients take a 200 mg tablet twice daily but this dose may not be right for everyone
- Dosing is typically by lean body weight, meaning that lighter patients may use a lower dose.
- Dr. Donovan frequently uses the following guide for dosing. He will advise if this applies to you or not.

PLAQUENIL DOSING

WEIGHT (LBS)	WEIGHT (kg)	Maximum per day (mg)	Max per week (mg)	Max dose
90	41	266	1861	200 mg once daily
100	45	295	2068	200 mg 2x/day Mon to Fri
110	50	325	2275	200 mg 2x/day Mon to Fri
120	55	355	2482	200 mg 2x/day Mon to Sat
130	60	384	2688	200 mg 2x/day Mon to Sat
140	64	445	3118	200 mg 2x/day everyday

What are the side effects of hydroxychloroquine?

Dr. Donovan will discuss all possible side effects so you can decide if this medication is right for you

Side effects include:

1. **Eye changes.** This including vision changes, double vision. Frequent eye exams are required for anyone using hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil). Rarely permanent changes in vision can occur
2. **Lowered blood counts.** Frequent blood tests will be needed for anyone using hydroxychloroquine. This allows Dr Donovan to monitor your blood cells counts and liver tests.
3. **Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea**
4. **Neurological problems.** This includes irritability, psychosis mood swings, headaches
5. **Skin color changes.** A brownish or even bluish color can occur including the face
6. **Worsening of one's existing psoriasis**
7. **Allergic reactions**
8. **Rarely Hair Loss.** Most people who feel that hydroxychloroquine is causing hair loss actually have another reason. True hair loss from hydroxychloroquine is not common.

Are any blood tests or other tests needed when starting hydroxychloroquine?

- Yes, blood tests will be ordered at the start of treatment and then periodically while you are on the drug.
- You will be requested to get an eye examination before starting (or soon after starting) and then periodically while on therapy.

