

HYDROXCHLOROQUINE – patient information leaflet.

What is it?

Hydroxychloroquine is a disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug (DMARD). It reduces the activity of the immune system, which can become overactive in diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. It's often taken in combination with other drugs (such as methotrexate). It is also used to treat malaria but you should not assume that you are protected against malaria when travelling to malaria endemic areas and should seek advice from your surgeries travel clinic.

How often you should take it?

It is usually taken 200mg twice daily or 400mg once daily, but you will be advised by your doctor how often to take the medication.

What are the common side effects?

Side effects are not common but include the following:

What are the side effects and what to look out for?

- skin rashes, especially ones made worse by sunlight
- nausea or indigestion
- diarrhoea
- headaches
- bleaching of the hair or hair loss
- tinnitus (ringing in your ears)
- blurred vision.

Speak to your doctor or specialist (hospital) nurses if you develop any of these symptoms after starting medication.

In about 1 in 2000 cases Hydroxychloroquine may damage the eye. It is advisable to have an eye check with an optician once a year and to tell them that you're taking Hydroxychloroquine.

- If any of the aforementioned symptoms are severe
- If you develop rashes / mouth ulcers
- Develop chicken pox or shingles
- Difficulty breathing on starting medication

Stop the medication and contact your GP surgery on **01332 667911**. Or phone nurse rheumatologist line on **01332 787710**.

Or Contact out of hour service on **111** during out of hours or weekends.

Other considerations:

You can have vaccination whilst on Hydroxychloroquine.

It's fine to drink alcohol in moderation whilst on ciclosporin.

Pregnancy and breast feeding have been shown to be safe whilst taking this tablet.

Please remember to have yearly eye checks and to report any visual symptoms to your GP or optician as soon as possible.

If you have any other concerns, speak to your GP or specialist nurses on the numbers provided.