

HYDROXYUREA

Other NAMES: Hydrea®

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Hydroxyurea is used in combination with other antiretroviral (anti-HIV) agents in the nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI or Nuke) family (e.g. didanosine/ Videx™) to enhance the actions of these drugs. It does not interfere with virus reproduction directly. Instead, it depletes a substance necessary for viral replication allowing other drugs to interfere with virus reproduction more successfully.

When used in combination with other drugs, it will slow down the replication of HIV and may therefore slow the progression of HIV disease. Treatment with hydroxyurea does not reduce the risk of passing infection on to others. You will still be able to pass HIV by sexual contact, by blood transfer or by sharing needles. You should always use appropriate precautions to prevent passing HIV on to others.

HOW should this drug be taken?

The usual dose of hydroxyurea is 500mg twice daily. It may be taken with or without food.

If you are unable to swallow the capsules, you can empty the contents of the capsule into a glass of water and drink it immediately. Be careful not to let the

powder come in contact with your skin or eyes. Also, avoid inhaling the powder when opening the capsules. If the powder is spilled, it should immediately be wiped up with a damp disposable towel and then discarded with the capsules in a closed container such as a plastic bag. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

It is important to drink a lot of water when you are taking this drug. This may decrease the chance of developing kidney problems.

Your dosage is:

500 mg capsule

___ capsule (___ mg) ___ times a day

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of hydroxyurea, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

The most commonly reported adverse effects include: **diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, mouth ulcers, dizziness, drowsiness, loss of appetite, and headache.** Less common adverse effects include constipation, mild hair loss, skin rash or itching, fever, chills and a general feeling of being unwell. If you develop any of these symptoms, notify your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Hydroxyurea can **lower white blood cells** in your blood, which may make it easier for you to get infections. If you experience fever, chills, cough, lower back or side pain or any pain or difficulty urinating, contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Hydroxyurea can also **lower red blood cells** in your blood. Red blood cells carry oxygen to all the parts of your body. If this occurs, you may experience shortness of breath, fatigue, or a racing heartbeat. Consult your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if these symptoms occur.

Hydroxyurea can also **decrease platelets**, which play an important role in blood clotting. If you notice any unusual bleeding or bruising (e.g. nose bleeds, black or tarry stools, blood in urine or bleeding when brushing your teeth), notify your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.

What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

Prior to starting hydroxyurea, inform your doctor if you have kidney disease.

Hydroxyurea may interfere with other drugs you are taking. Inform your doctor and pharmacist of all prescribed and

non-prescribed drugs you are taking. As well, you should inform them of natural products you are taking. If you wish to start a new drug or natural product, please consult with your pharmacist before doing so.

It is important to tell your doctor if you are pregnant, intend to have children or are breastfeeding. You should NOT use hydroxyurea in these situations since there is a chance that it may cause birth defects. Also, you should NOT use hydroxyurea if you are a man contemplating conception.

If you are a woman with childbearing potential, you should always use appropriate contraceptive methods (birth control pill, condom) to avoid becoming pregnant while you are taking hydroxyurea. In general, even if you are not taking hydroxyurea, the use of condoms is always recommended to decrease the risk of passing HIV on to others.

How should this drug be STORED?

Hydroxyurea capsules are sensitive to moisture and light. Keep in a tightly closed container at room temperature (15 - 30°C). Hydroxyurea should be kept well out of the reach of children. Ensure that the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date ("EXP") shown on the outside of the package.

Do not store in your bathroom or kitchen, as heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you

are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

Pharmacist: _____
Telephone: _____

Reference: Product monograph Hydrea® (hydroxyurea).
Montréal, Qc, Canada: Squibb Canada Inc., 2002.
Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional
Specialty Group, 2003.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be
found at: www.hivclinic.ca

HYDROXYUREA

MEDICATION

FACT SHEET