

# HYDROXYUREA

Other names: Hydrea®



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why you are taking this medication

Hydroxyurea (hye-DROX-ee-yoo-REE-ah) is a medicine used to treat many kinds of cancer. It is a capsule to take by mouth.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or allergic reaction to hydroxyurea before taking hydroxyurea. Also tell your doctor if you have a history of seizures.

It is important to take hydroxyurea exactly as directed by your doctor. Hydroxyurea may be taken with food or on an empty stomach with a glass of water or juice. Make sure you understand the directions. Wash your hands after handling hydroxyurea capsules or packaging.

If you miss a dose of hydroxyurea, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Your doctor may tell you to drink plenty of liquids (8 cups or 2,000 mL a day) during the first one to two weeks of treatment. This helps prevent kidney problems.

Store hydroxyurea capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.

A blood test may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results or other side effects.

Tell other doctors or dentists that you are being treated with hydroxyurea before you receive any treatment from them.

## Other medication

Other drugs may interact with hydroxyurea. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new medicines.

Alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of hydroxyurea.

## Pregnancy and breast feeding

It is not known if hydroxyurea causes sterility in men or menopause in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with hydroxyurea.

It is best to use birth control while being treated with hydroxyurea. Hydroxyurea may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy.

Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant.

Do not breast feed during treatment with hydroxyurea.

## Side effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

## Changes in your blood

This medicine may cause temporary changes in your blood. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

EFFECT ON YOUR BLOOD	WHAT TO DO
<p>Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection.</p> <p><b>When they are low you are at greater risk of having an infection.</b></p> <p>This rarely occurs with hydroxyurea.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the toilet.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• See your doctor <b><i>immediately</i></b> at the first sign of an infection such as fever (a body temperature of 38°C or more by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>
<p>Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury.</p> <p><b>When the platelet count is low you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.</b></p> <p>This rarely occurs with hydroxyurea.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself.</li> <li>• Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene.</li> </ul> <p>Some medicines such as aspirin or ibuprofen may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by a doctor.</li> <li>• For minor pain, try paracetamol first.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	WHAT TO DO
Hair loss is rare with hydroxyurea. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with hydroxyurea. Colour and texture may change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush.</li> <li>• Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.</li> </ul>

**Stop taking hydroxyurea and see your doctor or get emergency help immediately if you have:**

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** soon after a treatment including flushing, fever, rash, itching, dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (a body temperature of 38°C or more using an oral thermometer); shaking chills; cough; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum), cloudy or foul smelling urine, painful, tender or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.

**See your doctor as soon as possible (during office hours) if you have:**

- Severe **skin reaction** where you have had radiation.
- Signs of **anaemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay coloured stools.
- Severe **stomach pain**.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Skin changes** such as ulcers, stretch marks or slow wound healing.
- Significant changes in **thinking** clearly and logically.
- Increased **sore throat** or **mouth** that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.

**Check with your doctor if any of the following continue or bother you:**

- Nausea, vomiting, constipation, loss of appetite or diarrhoea.
- Sores in mouth or on lips.
- Drowsiness or dizziness.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Headache or pain not controlled with paracetamol.
- Swelling of hands, feet or lower legs.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Skin colour or nail changes.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist**