

PATIENT PACKAGE INSERT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PHARMACISTS’ REGULATIONS (PREPARATIONS) - 1986

The medicine is dispensed with a doctor’s prescription only

Plaquenil

200 mg Film-Coated Tablets

Active ingredient and its quantity:

Each Plaquenil tablet contains:

Hydroxychloroquine sulfate 200 mg (155 mg base)

Inactive and allergenic ingredients in the preparation: See section 6 “Further information”.

Read this leaflet carefully in its entirety before using the medicine.

Keep this leaflet; you may need to read it again.

This leaflet contains concise information about the medicine. If you have further questions, refer to the doctor or pharmacist.

This medicine has been prescribed to treat you. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them even if it seems to you that their medical condition is similar.

1. WHAT IS THE MEDICINE INTENDED FOR?

The medicine is intended for the treatment and control of symptoms of malaria attacks, treatment of lupus erythematosus and rheumatoid arthritis.

Therapeutic group: The active ingredient belongs to the aminoquinoline group.

2. BEFORE USING THE MEDICINE

Do not use the medicine if:

- you are sensitive (allergic) to hydroxychloroquine, chloroquine or to any of the additional ingredients contained in the medicine (see section 6 “Further information”).**

If you are uncertain whether you are suffering from an allergic reaction to the medicine, consult the pharmacist or doctor. Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include asthma attack, facial swelling, skin rash or hay fever.

- you suffer from macular degeneration (maculopathy) or have suffered in the past from changes in vision when taking medicines for treatment of rheumatoid arthritis or for treatment of malaria.**
- you have a heart rhythm disorder.**
- Do not use the medicine in children under 6 years of age.**
- Do not use the medicine for long periods of time in children over 6 years of age.**

Special warnings regarding use of the medicine

- Plaquenil can cause severe hypoglycemia (low blood sugar levels), including loss of consciousness, which can be life-threatening. If you suffer from symptoms of hypoglycemia (see section 3 “How should you use the medicine?”), refer to the doctor immediately, and perform a test for blood sugar levels.

Before treatment with Plaquenil, inform the doctor if:

- you are taking any other medicine for any medical condition.
- you are allergic to quinine.
- you have allergies to any of the ingredients listed in section 6 “Further information” at the end of this leaflet.
- you suffer from eye problems.
- you suffer from hypoglycemia. Plaquenil may increase the risk of low blood sugar levels.
- you suffer from an inactive chronic infection such as hepatitis B, chickenpox/shingles (a painful blistering rash) or tuberculosis as the infections may flare up.
- you suffer or have suffered from one or more of the following conditions:
 - Chloroquine-resistant malaria.
 - Liver or kidney function problems.
 - Diabetes.
 - Stomach, brain (neurological disorders) or circulation problems.
 - Heart muscle disease.
 - Skin diseases, particularly psoriasis, which is a type of itchy rash.
 - G6PD enzyme deficiency - deficiency of a chemical substance that leads to the breakdown of sugar in the body.
 - Porphyria - a rare blood pigment disease.
 - Porphyria cutanea tarda (PCT) - a rare disorder of painful blisters on the skin.
 - Myasthenia gravis (a disease that causes general muscle weakness, including in some cases muscles used for breathing). You may notice a worsening of symptoms such as muscle weakness, difficulty swallowing, double vision, etc.

Serious skin reactions

- Serious skin reactions have been reported with the use of Plaquenil.
- Frequently, the rash can involve ulcers of the mouth, throat, nose, genitals and conjunctivitis (red and swollen eyes). These serious skin rashes are often preceded by flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache and body ache. The rash may progress to widespread blistering and peeling of the skin.
- If you develop these skin symptoms, stop taking Plaquenil and contact the doctor immediately.

Mental problems

Certain people treated with Plaquenil may experience mental problems, such as irrational thoughts, anxiety, hallucinations, feeling confused or depressed, including thoughts of self-harm or suicide, even in people who did not have similar problems in the past. If you or others around you notice any of these side effects (see section 4 “Side effects”), seek immediate medical assistance and discontinue treatment if you have thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

- Talk to the doctor if you have a rare illness called porphyria which affects your metabolism.

Muscle and nerve disorders

Hydroxychloroquine may cause muscle and nerve disorders. Caution must be exercised when taking this medicine for a long time; your doctor will occasionally check for muscle weakness, numbness and pain.

Tests and follow-up

During treatment, the doctor will refer you for the following tests:

Eye examinations:

The doctor will refer you for a vision test every few months in order to ensure that there is no change in your vision.

In extremely rare cases, Plaquenil tablets were associated with blindness. This can be avoided by periodic vision tests.

Sunglasses are recommended upon exposure to the sun.

Blood tests:

The doctor will refer you to perform periodic blood tests.

The doctor may monitor your blood sugar levels if you have experienced symptoms associated with decreased sugar levels while taking Plaquenil.

Drug interactions

If you are taking, or have recently taken, other medicines, including non-prescription medicines and nutritional supplements, tell the doctor or pharmacist. Especially inform the doctor or pharmacist if you are taking:

- Medicines to treat depression, including fluoxetine, paroxetine and the herbal preparation *Hypericum* (St. John’s wort).
- Digoxin, flecainide, propafenone, quinidine - to treat heart diseases.
- Medicines to treat diabetes.
- Medicines for the suppression of the immune system, such as cyclosporin.
- Antiarrhythmic medicines, such as amiodarone and moxifloxacin.
- Other antimalarial medicines.
- Medicines to treat epilepsy, such as carbamazepine and phenobarbital.
- Tamoxifen (a medicine to treat breast cancer).
- Anti-infective medicines.
- Some antibiotics used for bacterial infections (such as moxifloxacin, azithromycin, clarithromycin, erythromycin, roxithromycin). Taking these antibiotics at the same time as hydroxychloroquine may increase the chance of you getting side effects that affect your heart which could be life-threatening.
- Medicines that may affect the blood.
- Medicines that may affect the eyes.
- Antacids containing magnesium or kaoline or cimetidine, used to neutralize stomach acid.
- Itraconazole, an antifungal medicine.
- Rifampicin (antibiotic).
- Grapefruit juice.
- Anticoagulants, such as dabigatran and clopidrogel.
- Medicines to treat high cholesterol, such as gemfibrozil, statins.
- Ritonavir (a medicine to treat HIV).

These medicines may be affected by Plaquenil tablets, or alternatively, affect the way Plaquenil works.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Avoid using Plaquenil during pregnancy except when, in the judgement of the doctor, the potential benefit outweighs the potential hazards.

If Plaquenil tablets are taken for long periods of time, there is an increased risk to the fetus. This may cause problems in brain function, hearing, balance and vision.

There are very limited data on the safety in the breastfed infant during long-term treatment with Plaquenil. The active ingredient (hydroxychloroquine) is excreted in breast milk and it is known that infants are extremely sensitive to the toxic effects.

Do not use Plaquenil if you are breastfeeding, unless your doctor thinks that the benefit exceeds the risks.

If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding, consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medicine. The doctor will discuss with you whether Plaquenil is suitable for you.

Driving and using machines

Plaquenil may cause dizziness.

The use of this medicine may impair vision.

Make sure you know how the medicine affects you before driving, operating machines or performing any activity that could be dangerous if your vision is blurred.

Children should be cautioned against riding a bicycle or playing near the road, etc.

3. HOW SHOULD YOU USE THE MEDICINE?

Always use the preparation according to the doctor’s instructions.

Check with the doctor or pharmacist if you are uncertain about the dosage and treatment regimen of the preparation.

The dosage and treatment regimen will be determined by the doctor only.

The usual dosage for adults, unless otherwise specified by a doctor, is: Rheumatoid arthritis:

2-3 tablets daily. Later in the treatment, the doctor may reduce the dosage to 1-2 tablets daily.

Lupus erythematosus:

2-4 tablets daily. Later in the treatment, the doctor may reduce the dosage to 1-2 tablets daily.

Treatment of malaria:

The starting dose is 4 tablets. Take another 2 tablets 6-8 hours later. Afterwards, take two additional tablets once daily during the next two days.

Preventive treatment of malaria:

2 tablets once every 7 days. The tablets should be taken on exactly the same day of each week. For example, if the first dose was taken on a Sunday, then each weekly dose should be taken on Sundays.

The treatment should be started 2 weeks before entering the affected area and should be continued for 8 weeks after leaving it.

If treatment cannot be started 2 weeks before entering the affected area, start the treatment with a one-time double dosage (of 4 tablets) divided into 2 doses, with a 6-hour interval between doses. Then, continue with the normal recommended dosage for 8 weeks after leaving the affected area.

Children: The dosage is according to the doctor’s instructions only.

Do not exceed the recommended dose.

There is no information about crushing or pulverizing the tablet.

Do not chew! Swallow the medicine with water or another liquid.

It is advisable to swallow the medicine with a glass of milk or food to prevent stomach irritation.

Tell the medical team that is treating you, such as a doctor or pharmacist, that you are taking Plaquenil and also if you are supposed to start taking a new medicine.

Tell the doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms: weakness, shaking, sweating, headache, dizziness, lack of concentration, tearing or crying, irritability, hunger and numbness around the lips and fingers. These symptoms may be related to low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia). If you experience any of the symptoms of hypoglycemia, you must immediately raise your blood sugar levels. This can be done by taking one of the following:

- 5-7 jelly candies.
- 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey.
- 1/2 can of a soft drink (not diet).
- 2-3 tablets/cubes of concentrated sugar.
- If you don’t plan a meal or snack within the next 10-15 minutes, add carbohydrates, such as a biscuit, fruit or milk, after the initial symptoms have passed. Adding these carbohydrates will prevent a second decrease of your blood sugar levels.

Make sure that you, your friends, family and colleagues at work can identify the symptoms related to decreased sugar levels and know how to treat them.

If you accidentally took a higher dosage

If you took an overdose, or if a child has accidentally swallowed the medicine, refer immediately to a doctor or proceed to a hospital emergency room and bring the package of the medicine with you. Children are especially sensitive to preparations from the 4-aminoquinoline group. Adhere to these instructions even if you do not feel signs of discomfort or poisoning. You may need urgent medical care.

If you took too high a dosage, you may experience headaches, somnolence, visual disturbances or seizures.

These symptoms may occur within 30 minutes of overdose.

If you forgot to take the medicine

If you are being treated with Plaquenil for rheumatoid arthritis or for lupus erythematosus, do not take a double dose. Treatment should be continued as usual the next day.

If you are taking Plaquenil to treat or prevent malaria, take the dose as soon as you remember and continue treatment as usual.

If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the forgotten dose and take the next dose at the usual time.

Do not take a double dose to make up for the forgotten dose.

Adhere to the treatment regimen as recommended by the doctor.

Even if there is an improvement in your health condition, do not stop treatment with the medicine without consulting the doctor or pharmacist.

Do not take medicines in the dark! Check the label and the dose each time you take medicine. Wear glasses if you need them.

If you have further questions regarding use of the medicine, consult the doctor or pharmacist.

4. SIDE EFFECTS

As with any medicine, use of Plaquenil may cause side effects in some users. Do not be alarmed when reading the list of side effects. You may not suffer from any of them.

Serious side effects:

Contact the doctor immediately or proceed to a hospital emergency room if you notice the following side effects; you may need emergency medical care:

- Visual disturbances.
- Impairment of hearing or loss of hearing.
- Suicidal behavior.

- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
- Feeling depressed, nervous or anxious, feeling confused, agitation, sleeping difficulties, delusions, hallucinations, mood changes, elation or overexcitement.
- Frequent fever, severe chills, bruises, sore throat or mouth ulcers (these may be signs of problems in the circulatory system).
- Changes in heart rhythm.
- Liver problems. Symptoms may include a general feeling of being unwell, with or without jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine, nausea, vomiting and/or abdominal pain.
- Rare cases of liver failure have been reported (including fatal cases).
- Kidney problems due to accumulation of phospholipids.
- Severe symptoms of hypoglycemia, including:

- confusion.
- seizures or convulsions.
- loss of consciousness.

- Rash with a fever and flu-like symptoms and enlarged lymph nodes. These could be symptoms of a condition called DRESS (drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms).

- Blistering, widespread scaly skin, pus-filled spots, together with fever. These could be symptoms of a condition called AGEP (acute generalized exanthematous pustulosis).

- Blistering or peeling of the skin around the lips, eyes, mouth, nose, genitals, hands or feet, flu-like symptoms and fever. These could be symptoms of a condition called Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS).

- Multiple skin lesions, itching of the skin, fever and a general ill feeling. These could be symptoms of a condition called TEN (toxic epidermal necrolysis).

- Skin reaction including reddish-purple color, raised, painful sores, particularly on your arms, hands, fingers, face and neck, which may also be accompanied by fever. These could be symptoms of a condition called Sweet’s syndrome.

- Sensitivity to light.

- Seizures.

- Unusual tiredness.

Additional side effects:

Contact the doctor if you suffer from the following side effects:

- Gastrointestinal disturbances, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pains.
- Loss of appetite.
- Muscle weakness.
- Dizziness.
- Ringing in the ears.
- Headache.
- Nervousness.
- Skin rash and itching.
- Hair loss.
- Weakening of the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy) which leads to breathing difficulties, cough, hypertension, swelling, increased heart rate and decreased amount of urine.

If you suffer from psoriasis, you are more likely to suffer from skin side effects than other patients taking Plaquenil.

If a side effect occurs, if one of the side effects worsens, or if you suffer from a side effect not mentioned in the leaflet, consult the doctor.

Side effects can be reported to the Ministry of Health by clicking on the link “Report Side Effects of Drug Treatment” found on the Ministry of Health homepage (www.health.gov.il) that directs you to the online form for reporting side effects, or by entering the link: <https://sideeffects.health.gov.il>

5. HOW SHOULD THE MEDICINE BE STORED?

Avoid poisoning! This medicine, and any other medicine, should be kept in a safe place out of the reach and sight of children and/or infants in order to avoid poisoning.

Do not induce vomiting unless explicitly instructed to do so by the doctor.

Do not use the medicine after the expiry date (exp. date) that appears on the package. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Shelf life after opening: According to the expiry date (exp. date) that appears on the package.

Storage conditions: Store at a temperature under 25°C.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

In addition to the active ingredient, the medicine also contains:

Starch, dibasic calcium phosphate dihydrate, ready to use white colorant, magnesium stearate, polyethylene glycol 400, carnauba wax.

What the medicine looks like and the contents of the package:

White to off-white peanut-shaped tablets. The package contains 100 tablets.

License holder and importer and its address: Sanofi Israel Ltd. Greenwork Park P.O. box 47 Yakum.

Revised in August 2024 according to MOH guidelines.

This leaflet does not contain all the information about your medicine. If you have any questions or are not sure about anything, please ask your doctor.

Registration number of the medicine in the National Drug Registry of the Ministry of Health: 449623782.