

## Hydroxyurea (Hydrea)

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### About This Medicine

HYDROXYUREA (hye drox ee yoor EE a) prevents the symptoms of sickle cell disease, such as pain crises and acute chest syndrome. It may also reduce the need for blood transfusions. It works by keeping red blood cells round and flexible, which prevents blood cells from clumping together. This also increases blood flow and the amount of oxygen that gets to your tissues. It can also be used to treat some types of cancer. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It is given orally (by mouth).

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your care team if you have questions.

### Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores in your mouth that hurt.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 30% or greater of people treated with hydroxyurea. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your care team.

### Warnings and Precautions

- Severe bone marrow suppression
- This medicine may raise your risk of getting a second cancer, such as leukemia and skin cancer.
- Inflammation of your tissue and/or blood vessels in your skin which can cause red or purple spots on your skin. You may get redness, blisters and very rarely the tissues and/or vessels may die (necrosis).
- Anemia (decreased red blood cells) due to the breakdown of your red blood cells.

- Your red blood cells may also become larger than normal. This is called macrocytosis, and it usually resolves on its own.
- If you have received radiation treatments, your skin may become red after hydroxyurea. This reaction is called “radiation recall.” Your body is recalling, or remembering, that it had radiation therapy.
- Inflammation (swelling) and/or scarring and/or thickening of the lungs which can be life-threatening. You may have a dry cough and/or trouble breathing.

**Note:** Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.

## Important Information

- Talk to your care team before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving hydroxyurea.
- Your care team may prescribe folic acid to take with your hydroxyurea. Talk with your care team about specific instructions.
- Tell your care team if you are using a continuous glucose monitoring system. Hydroxyurea may falsely increase the sensor glucose result, which could lead to low blood sugar if insulin is given as a result of the sensor reading.

## How to Take Your Medicine

- Swallow the medicine whole as prescribed by your care team. Do not open, break, or chew capsules.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your care team for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time and do not double up on the next dose.
- **Overdosage:** If you think you have taken too much of this medicine contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water, before and after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- If you get any of the content of a broken capsules on your skin or in your eyes, you should wash the area of the skin well with soap and water right away. Wash your eyes with flowing water for at least 15 minutes and call your care team. Call your care team if you get a skin reaction.
- If the content of broken capsules is spilled, immediately wipe it up with a damp disposable towel and discard the towel and the capsule in a closed container, such as a plastic bag. The spilled area should be cleaned 3 times using a detergent solution (soap and water) followed by clean water.
- This medicine may be present in the urine, stool and other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your care team after your treatment. If you take a pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Keep lid tightly closed. Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medicine label. Some facilities have



take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your care team how to dispose of unused medicine.

## Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your care team tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your care team before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your care team about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- If you are not able to move your bowels, check with your care team before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- Ask your care team about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation and/or diarrhea.
- To help with decreased appetite, eat small, frequent meals. Eat foods high in calories and protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Consider using sauces and spices to increase taste. Daily exercise, with your care team's approval, may increase your appetite.
- If you received radiation, and your skin becomes red or irritated again, follow the same care instructions you did during radiation treatment. Be sure to tell your care team administering your chemotherapy about your skin changes.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outdoors.



- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your care team says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your care team for medicine if your rash bothers you.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of hydroxyurea with food.
- Check with your care team about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with hydroxyurea. Also, check with your care team before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

## When to Call Your Care Team

Call your care team if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Dry cough
- Pain in your chest
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Signs of low blood sugar: feeling sleepy, increased hunger, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Red or purple spots, and/or ulcers on your skin
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for at least 6 months after the last dose. If you can get your partner pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for at least 1 year after the last dose. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant or think your partner might be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine.



- **Fertility warning:** This medicine may affect your ability to have children in the future. If you plan to have children, talk with your care team

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