

What is Hydroxyurea?

Hydroxyurea is an agent used to treat some types of leukaemia when there is a very high white blood cell count and haematological conditions such as sickle cell anaemia.

How does it work?

Hydroxyurea interferes with the synthesis of DNA. For the management of sickle cell anaemia, hydroxyurea helps the red blood cells to stay round and flexible so that they are less rigid and sticky. This prevents the red blood cells from blocking blood vessels in your organs, muscles and tissues.

How is it given?

Hydroxyurea is given by mouth as a capsule.

Special instructions:

- Hydroxyurea should be taken with food.
- Hydroxyurea can cause nausea and vomiting. Your doctor can prescribe you medicines to prevent you from feeling sick and throwing up.
- If you vomit within 30 minutes after taking your hydroxyurea, inform your doctor or nurse right away.
- This medicine may make your mouth sore and irritated. Your doctor or nurse may give you mouth washes to keep your mouth clean after taking hydroxyurea.
- If you cannot swallow the capsule, the capsule can be opened and dispersed in water or your pharmacy can make a liquid for you. See below for further instructions.

Safe Handling:

All chemotherapy taken by mouth can pose a health hazard to caregivers and patients. Take care when handling this medicine and try to prevent the medication from touching your skin. Taking precautions will protect both the patient and the caregiver.

- We suggest that the caregiver wears gloves while handling this medicine. If your skin comes into contact with the medicine, wash your hands or the area of contact right away.
- Prepare a clean area where the drug can be handled safely (away from areas where food is prepared, out of reach of children and away from any fans or air vents). Clean up spills in the area where the medicine is prepared.

If your child cannot swallow the hydroxyurea capsule(s), the capsules may be given in the following way:

- You will need the following:
 - An oral syringe
 - A dedicated measuring cup or glass or container
 - Dedicated rubber gloves or disposable gloves (optional) –not to be used for any other purpose
1. Place a little water (approximately 30mL) into a measuring cup.
 2. Open the contents of the capsule(s) onto the water and allow the powder to disperse. This may take a few minutes. With the oral syringe, gently mix the powder into the water.
 3. Using the oral syringe, draw up the liquid in the measuring cup and give the dose to your child.
 4. Rinse the oral syringe, measuring cup and rubber gloves (if not disposable) in warm water and allow to dry. These can be used again for further doses but do not use them for any other purpose. Do not place the oral syringe in the dishwasher.

Hydroxyurea

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Patient/Caregiver Information

Possible Side Effects:

Listed below, but not limited to, are the more commonly experienced side effects that you may see. The side effects your child might experience may be temporary and some may be permanent.

Likely Happens to 21-100 children out of every 100	Less Likely Happens to 5-20 children out of every 100	Rare but serious Happens to <5 children out of every 100
▪ Cough or hoarseness ▪ Fever ▪ Chills ▪ Lower back or side pain ▪ Painful or difficult urination	▪ Black, tarry bowel motions ▪ Blood in urine or stools ▪ Red spots on skin ▪ Unusual bleeding or bruising	▪ Blackening of fingernails and toenails ▪ Sores in mouth and on lips

This information sheet is a brief overview. Each individual can respond differently to the medication, it is vital that you communicate all signs and symptoms you observe to your doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions about the information provided please discuss them with your oncologist or haematologist.

Further information can be obtained from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or at the following website:
<http://medsafe.govt.nz/consumers/medicine/where.asp>