

HYDROXYCHLOROQUIN (PLAQUENIL)

Hydroxychloroquin (Plaquenil) is a drug that was originally used to treat malaria. Therefore, it is often classified as an antimalarial drug. Today it is used for many other skin problems such as cutaneous lupus and even has effects in rheumatoid arthritis.

Plaquenil is a drug which has antiinflammatory effects. In many skin diseases an overactive immune system can result in red scaling patches. Plaquenil can decrease the inflammation which leads to these red scaling patches. You will often see an improvement in the size and texture of your skin as the lesions continue to improve.

Plaquenil is taken as one or two pills per day. The pills can be taken separately or at the same time. In most cases, a blood test is done before starting Plaquenil and further blood tests may be done as you stay on treatment.

Plaquenil is generally very well tolerated and is a safe medicine. As with any medicine, there are uncommon side effects such as mild stomach upset, headache or rash if you are allergic. Some of these side effects can be diminished if you take the medication with food. As with any medicine, there are unusual rare side effects. If you have any problems taking your pills, please let me know.

Plaquenil is a medication which often works very slowly. If you take the pill for a few weeks or a month and do not notice any change, please do not be discouraged. It often takes many months for the full effects to become apparent.

As with any medicine, it would be best not to use this therapy if you are pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant.

In summary, Plaquenil is a medication which is safe and effective for lupus and other forms of skin problems. If you have any other questions regarding this medicine, please do not hesitate before you leave the office.