**Hydroxyurea**

What is Hydroxyurea (hye-drox-ee-ure-EE-a) and how does it work?

Hydroxyurea is a medicine given to patients with sickle cell disease. This medicine is used to prevent a pain crisis and acute chest syndrome in patients with sickle cell disease. It works by increasing HgbF and the water (hydration) content in the red blood cells. Other names for this drug are Droxia™ and Hydrea ™.

What should I tell my doctor before taking this medicine?

Talk to your doctor about the following:

- The medicines/pills you are taking, including:
  - Medicines prescribed by any of your doctors
  - Herbal supplements
  - Vitamins
  - Over-the-counter medicines
- If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or plan to become pregnant. **This medicine can cause birth defects and should not be taken by women of childbearing age.** Your doctor will talk with you about using birth control while you are taking this medicine.

How do I take this medicine?

- This medicine is a capsule that is taken by mouth. Your doctor will tell you how much and when you should take this medicine.
- This medicine should be taken at the same time each day. If you miss
a dose, wait until it is time for your next dose. Skip the missed dose. Do not double up on doses.

- This medicine should be taken on an empty stomach (one hour before or two hours after eating)
- Taking this medicine at bedtime may decrease your chance of having an upset stomach.
- Keep this medicine away from children and do not share it with anyone.

- **This medicine should be handled with care, and people who are not taking this medicine should be careful to keep from touching it.**

To reduce your chance of touching the medicine:
- Wear disposable gloves when handling the capsules or the bottle that contains the medicine.
- Wash your hands well before and after you touch the bottle or capsules.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling urine, stool or vomit.
- Bring outdated medicine or extra medicine to the clinic or pharmacy for disposal. Do not flush the capsules down the toilet or throw them in the trash.

- While you are taking this medicine, your doctor will check your blood work. When you start this medicine, your doctor may change your dose a few times to make sure you are getting the dose that works best for you.
- It is important to have your blood drawn and keep all your doctor appointments while you are taking this medicine. Always bring a list of your current medicines with you to your doctor appointments.

**What are the side effects of this medicine?**

Everyone responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects of this medicine are:

- Constipation (difficulty having a bowel movement)
- Diarrhea (loose stools)
- Headache
- Hair loss
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Rash
- Weight gain

**When should I call my doctor?**

You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Dark colored urine
- Blood in your urine
- Seizures
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Bleeding
- Sores in your mouth
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Rash
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Change in color of fingernails

**Is there anything else I should know about this medicine?**

- This medicine may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and avoid people who are sick.
- This medicine may increase your risk of bruising and bleeding. You should not play rough sports or do activities that may cause you to be bruised, cut or injured.
- If you are thinking about starting a family, talk to your doctor about how to safely stop this medicine **before** you try to become pregnant.
- You should drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluid each day while taking this medicine. It is important to keep hydrated while you are receiving this treatment.