



[Home](#)

2. Hydroxyurea

# Hydroxyurea

**Generic name:** hydroxyurea [ *hye-DROX-ee-yoo-REE-a* ]

**Brand names:** [Droxia](#), [Hydrea](#), [Siklos](#), [Mylocel](#)

**Dosage forms:** oral capsule (200 mg; 300 mg; 400 mg; 500 mg), oral tablet (100 mg; 1000 mg)

**Drug class:** [Antimetabolites](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Aug 9, 2023. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

[Uses](#)   [Side effects](#)   [Warnings](#)   [Before taking](#)   [Dosage](#)   [Interactions](#)

## What is hydroxyurea?

Hydroxyurea is used to treat [chronic myeloid leukemia](#), [ovarian cancer](#), and certain types of [skin cancer](#) (squamous cell cancer of the head and neck).

Hydroxyurea is also used to reduce pain episodes and the need for blood transfusions in people with [sickle cell anemia](#). Hydroxyurea will not cure sickle cell anemia.

Hydroxyurea may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

## Hydroxyurea side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

**Hydroxyurea may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:**

- numbness, tingling, or burning pain in your hands or feet;
- skin numbness or purple discoloration;
- skin ulcers or open sores;
- sudden chest pain, [wheezing](#), dry cough, feeling short of breath;
- **low blood cell counts**--fever, chills, tiredness, mouth sores, easy bruising, unusual bleeding, pale skin, cold hands and feet, feeling light-headed; or
- **signs of liver or pancreas problems**--loss of appetite, upper stomach pain (that may spread to your back), nausea or vomiting, [fast heart rate](#), dark urine, [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

**Common side effects of hydroxyurea may include:**

- loss of appetite, nausea;

- [constipation](#), diarrhea;
- low blood cell counts;
- bleeding; or
- mouth sores.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Hydroxyurea side effects](#) (more detail)

## Related/similar drugs

### Keytruda

Keytruda is used to treat multiple types of cancer such as melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer ...

#### Reviews & ratings

4.9 / 10

[252 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

#### FEATURED

### Opdivo

Opdivo is used to treat many cancers, such as melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, malignant ...

#### Reviews & ratings

5.8 / 10

[93 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Gleevec

Gleevec is targeted cancer therapy for specific types of leukemia (blood cancer), bone marrow ...

#### Reviews & ratings

8.6 / 10

[37 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Sprycel

Sprycel is used to treat chronic myeloid leukemia and acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Learn about ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.5 / 10

[21 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Dasatinib

Dasatinib is used to treat Philadelphia chromosome-positive chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.7 / 10

[27 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Vitamin e

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that occurs naturally in some foods and is used to treat or prevent ...

### Reviews & ratings

[7 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Warnings

**Both men and women using hydroxyurea should use birth control to prevent pregnancy.** The use of hydroxyurea by either parent may cause birth defects.

Using hydroxyurea may increase your risk of developing other types of cancer, such as leukemia or skin cancer. **Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen when you are outdoors.**

Hydroxyurea can weaken your immune system. Call your doctor at once if you have a fever, chills, body aches, extreme tiredness, [shortness of breath](#), bruising, or unusual bleeding.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use hydroxyurea if you are allergic to it.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- kidney disease (or if you are on dialysis);
- [liver disease](#);
- a wound or ulcer on your leg;
- HIV or AIDS (especially if you take antiviral medicine);
- high levels of uric acid in your blood; or
- treatment with an interferon, chemotherapy, or radiation.

**Using hydroxyurea may increase your risk of developing other types cancer or leukemia. Talk with your doctor about your specific risk.**

Hydroxyurea can harm an unborn baby. **Both men and women using this medicine should use birth control to prevent pregnancy.** The use of this medicine by either parent may cause birth defects.

- **If you are a woman**, keep using [birth control](#) for at least 6 months after your last dose of hydroxyurea.
- **If you are a man**, keep using birth control for at least 1 year after your last dose (6 months if you took Siklos).
- **Tell your doctor right away if a pregnancy occurs while either the mother or the father is using this medicine.**

This medicine may affect fertility (ability to have children) in men. However, **it is important to use birth control because hydroxyurea may harm the baby if a pregnancy does occur.**

You should not breastfeed while you are taking hydroxyurea.

Older adults may be more sensitive to the effects of this medicine.

## How should I take hydroxyurea?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Hydroxyurea is usually taken once per day at the same time of day, with or without food. Swallow the pill whole with a glass of water.

Wash your hands before and after you handle hydroxyurea or the bottle that contains the pills. For best protection, wear disposable gloves when handling the pills.

Do not open the hydroxyurea capsule or crush or chew a tablet. Do not use a broken pill. **The medicine from a crushed or broken pill can be dangerous if it gets in your eyes, mouth, or nose, or on your skin.** If this occurs, wash your skin with soap and water or rinse your eyes with water.

If any powder from a broken pill is spilled, wipe it up at once with a damp paper towel and throw the towel away in a sealed plastic bag where children and pets cannot get to it.

Your doctor may also want you to take a [folic acid](#) supplement. **Follow dosing instructions very carefully.**

Hydroxyurea can lower your blood cell counts. **Your blood will need to be tested often.** Your cancer treatments may

be delayed based on the results.

This medicine can affect the results of certain medical tests. Tell any doctor who treats you that you are using hydroxyurea.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

 [Detailed Hydroxyurea dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

Overdose symptoms may include [drowsiness](#), mouth sores, and swelling with pain and purple discoloration in your hands and feet.

## What should I avoid while taking hydroxyurea?

Using hydroxyurea may increase your risk of developing skin cancer. Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. **Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.**

**Do not receive a "live" vaccine while using hydroxyurea**, or you could develop a serious [infection](#). Live vaccines include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), rotavirus, typhoid, yellow fever, varicella ([chickenpox](#)), zoster ([shingles](#)), and nasal flu ([influenza](#)) vaccine.

Avoid being near people who are sick or have infections. Tell your doctor at once if you develop signs of infection.

Do not handle hydroxyurea pills or the medicine bottle without skin protection (disposable gloves).

## What other drugs will affect hydroxyurea?

Some medicines can increase your risk of serious side effects while taking hydroxyurea. **Tell your doctor if you are also using antiviral medicine or an interferon.**

Other drugs may affect hydroxyurea, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Hydroxyurea drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does hydroxyurea interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

hydroxyurea

+

Enter a drug name

Add

## More about hydroxyurea

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(47\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Drug class: antimetabolites](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
- [En español](#)

## Patient resources

- [Hydroxyurea Capsules 200 mg, 300 mg, 400 mg patient information](#)
- [Hydroxyurea Tablets](#)
- [Hydroxyurea Capsules 500 mg](#)

## Other brands

[Hydrea](#), [Siklos](#), [Droxia](#), [Mylocel](#), [Xromi](#)

## Professional resources

- [Hydroxyurea monograph](#)
- [Hydroxyurea \(FDA\)](#)

## Other brands

[Hydrea](#), [Siklos](#), [Droxia](#), [Xromi](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia](#)
- [Sickle Cell Anemia](#)
- [Glioblastoma Multiforme](#)

- [Cervical Cancer](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

### [Medical Disclaimer](#)

Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 14.01.

### DRUG STATUS

#### Availability

**Rx** Prescription only

#### [Pregnancy & Lactation](#)


 Risk data available

#### CSA Schedule\*

**N/A** Not a controlled drug



#### Approval History

 Drug history at FDA



## User Reviews & Ratings

7.0 / 10

[47 Reviews](#)

## Images

[Hydroxyurea 500 mg \(724 par\)](#)



[View larger images](#)

## Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



## About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

## Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

## Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

**Drugs.com** provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices  
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.