

Medicines for the Prevention of Malaria While Traveling

Chloroquine (Aralen™)

What is chloroquine?

Chloroquine (also known as chloroquine phosphate) is an antimalarial medicine. It is available in the United States by prescription only. It is sold under the brand name Aralen, and it is also sold as a generic medicine. It is available in tablets of two sizes: 150mg base (250mg salt) and 300mg base (500mg salt).

You should know that the 150mg base tablet is the same as the 250mg salt tablet and the 300mg base tablet is the same as the 500mg salt tablet. It is just two different ways of describing the same thing.

Chloroquine can be prescribed for either prevention or treatment of malaria. This fact sheet provides information about its use for the prevention of malaria infection associated with travel.



Who can take chloroquine?

Chloroquine can be prescribed to adults and children of all ages. It can also be safely taken by pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Who should not take chloroquine?

People with psoriasis should not take chloroquine.

How should I take chloroquine?

Both adults and children should take one dose of chloroquine per week starting at least 1 week before traveling to the area where malaria transmission occurs. They should take one dose per week while there, and for 4 consecutive weeks after leaving.

The weekly dosage for adults is 300mg base (500mg salt).

Your doctor will have calculated the correct weekly dose for your child based on the child's weight. The child's dose should not exceed the adult dose of 300mg base (500mg salt) per week.

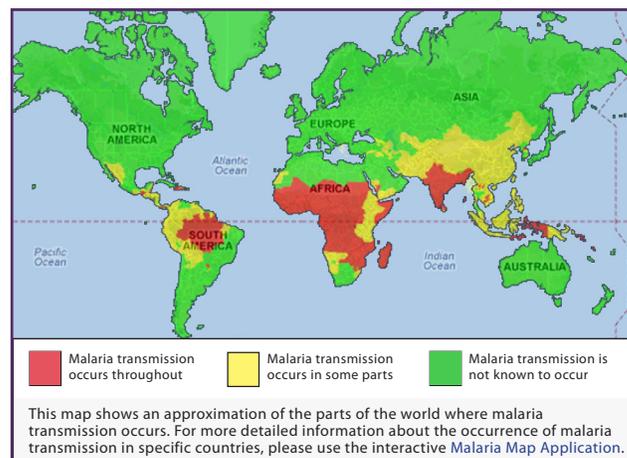
Where can I buy chloroquine?

Antimalarial drugs are available in the United States by prescription only. Medicines should be obtained at a pharmacy before travel rather than in the destination country. Buying medications abroad has its risks: the drugs could be of poor quality, contaminated, or counterfeit and not protect you against malaria.

In what parts of the world can chloroquine be used for prevention of malaria in travelers?

There are only a few places left in the world where chloroquine is still effective including parts of Central America and the Caribbean.

CDC keeps track of all the places in the world where malaria transmission occurs and which malaria drugs that are recommended for use in each place. This information can be found using the malaria map on the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/map/index.html>.



Chloroquine (Aralen™)

Malaria is a serious disease that can cause death if not treated right away. It is caused by a parasite that can infect a certain type of mosquito which feeds on humans.

About 1,500 cases of malaria are diagnosed in the United States each year almost all in travelers to parts of the world where malaria occurs.

Will chloroquine interact with my other medications?

Some other drugs can interact with chloroquine and cause you problems. Your doctor is responsible for evaluating the other medicines you are taking to ensure that there are no interactions between them and chloroquine. In some instances, medicines can be adjusted to minimize the interaction. You can also ask your pharmacist to check for drug interactions.

What are the potential side effects of chloroquine?

Chloroquine is a relatively well-tolerated medicine. The most common adverse reactions reported are stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and headache. These side effects can often be lessened by taking chloroquine with food. Chloroquine may also cause itching in some people.

All medicines may have some side effects. Minor side effects such as nausea, occasional vomiting, or diarrhea usually do not require stopping the antimalarial drug. If you cannot tolerate your antimalarial drug, see your health care provider; other antimalarial drugs are available.

Other considerations

- Good choice for longer trips because you only have to take the medicine once per week.
- Overdose of antimalarial drugs, particularly chloroquine, can be fatal. Medication should be stored in childproof containers out of the reach of infants and children.

How long is it safe to use chloroquine?

CDC has no limits on the use of chloroquine for the prevention of malaria. When chloroquine is used at higher doses for many years, a rare eye condition called retinopathy has occurred. People who take chloroquine for more than five years should get regular eye exams.

For more information:

Check out the CDC malaria website at www.cdc.gov/malaria

Health-care providers needing assistance with diagnosis or management of suspected cases of malaria should call the CDC Malaria Hotline: 770-488-7788 or 855-856-4713 toll-free (M-F, 9am-5pm, eastern time).

Emergency consultation after hours, call: 770-488-7100 and request to speak with a CDC Malaria Branch clinician.

Prevent Malaria

- Take an antimalarial drug.
- Prevent mosquito bites.
- If you get sick, immediately seek professional medical care.