Hydroxyurea (Droxia®)  
(“hy drox ee yoo REE uh”)

How this drug is given: by mouth

Purpose: To reduce frequent pain events and need for blood transfusions in patients with sickle cell anemia

How to take this drug

• Take capsule whole. Do not open capsules.

• Take with or without food.

• Try to take this drug at the same time each day.

• If you miss a dose, take as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double dose.

• Wash hands after taking the medication. Avoid handling crushed or broken capsules.

Storage and Disposal

• Store at room temperature, away from heat and moisture. Keep this medicine in its original container, out of the reach of children or pets.

• If you have unused oral chemotherapy pills (tablets or capsules), please return to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush down the toilet, dump in the sink or throw away in the trash.

Things that may occur during treatment

1. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in your:

   • Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
   • White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
   • Platelets, which help clot the blood to stop bleeding
This may happen 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. If you have a fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, tell your doctor or nurse right away.

2. Thinning of hair can occur approximately two to four weeks after treatment is begun. This could include body hair as well as scalp hair. You may want to purchase a wig before hair loss begins. Hair loss is temporary, and it may begin to grow back during treatment.

3. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.

4. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You may buy this at most drug stores. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks).

5. Skin changes, such as skin turning a darker color, can happen. There may be redness and pain over areas where you have gotten radiation therapy. Sunlight may cause your skin to burn more easily so use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater when you go outside. Do not go to tanning booths.

6. Fertility and Related Precautions:
   - It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could be harmful to an unborn baby.
   - Men may become sterile and may want to think about sperm banking prior to chemotherapy.
   - For women, your period (menstrual cycle) may not be regular for a while or may stop completely and you may not be able to get pregnant.
   - Women should not breast-feed while receiving this drug.
   - If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

Things that may occur after treatment ends (even months to years later)

- In very rare cases, you could get a second cancer years after taking hydroxyurea.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects in this teaching sheet may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you take other medications. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.