

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®) and Eye Exams

What is hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®)?

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®) is a medicine that is used to help with arthritis pain or other autoimmune disorders. You should take this medicine exactly as your doctor says. Your Rheumatology care team (including your doctor, nurses, and medical assistants) will monitor your eye health while you are on this medicine. We will ask you to have eye exams with your eye doctor. We will work with you and your eye doctor to get the results of the exams.

Why do I need eye exams do I need when I am taking hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®)?

When you take hydroxychloroquine, there is a small chance that you may have changes to your eyesight or experience loss of vision.

You have a higher risk of developing these eye problems if:

- You have been taking the medicine for more than 5 years
- You are taking a high dose of the medicine
- You already have eye (retinal) disease
- You already have kidney, liver, or heart disease
- You are currently taking tamoxifen, a medicine used to treat cancer

How often do I need eye exams?

You will have exams when you start taking the medicine, and every year if you are at higher risk for eye disease. We will remind you that your yearly eye exams are needed when you are at clinic visit, or when you contact us to refill your medicine.

What type of eye exams do I need?

Different eye exams allow your eye doctor to find eye damage that may be related to your medication use.

- **Humphrey Visual Field (HVF) test:**

During this test you sit down and look into a bowl-like machine. Small lights flash at different places inside the bowl. When you see the lights, you press a button. This test tells your doctor if blind spots have developed in your field of vision.

- **Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT):**

During this test, you look into a machine that scans your eyes and takes pictures to create a three-dimensional image of your eye. This test can help your eye doctor look for early signs of eye damage.

- **Dilated retinal exam:**

During this exam, your provider places eye drops in your eyes to keep the pupil open as they look into your eye. This exam helps your doctor see the back of your eye for signs of eye damage.

You will need different eye exams depending on how long you have been taking hydroxychloroquine and your risk of developing eye problems.

When you first start taking the medicine, you will need these exams once: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OCT• Dilated Retinal	After 5 years of taking the medicine, or if you are at higher risk, you will need these exams every year: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OCT• Humphrey Visual Field (HVF)
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Where can I have my eye exams done?

You can go to any eye doctor (ophthalmologist or optometrist) for your eye exams. If you have your exams at the Michigan Medicine Kellogg Eye Center, we will be able to see your results after your visit. If you go to another eye doctor, ask your eye doctor to fax your eye exam results to our clinic: Adult Rheumatology Clinic, FAX: (734) 936-3695.

What happens if I do not have my eye exams done?

It is important that you have your eye exams done when your doctor asks you to. If you do not have your eye exams, we will not know if you have eye damage. We may change your medicine refills until you can get your eye exams done. We will remind you when to get your exams and work with you to answer any questions.

What happens if I have eye damage?

Your eye doctor will tell you and us if they find any signs of eye damage. We will also receive a report of your eye exam results. If we are concerned that you might have eye damage related to your medicine, we will contact you to discuss your treatment plan. Do not stop taking hydroxychloroquine unless your doctor has told you to.

Who do I call with questions?

Please contact our clinic by phone at (888) 229-3065 or send us a message at MyUofMHealth.org patient portal if you have questions.

Where can I learn more?

Read this “Patient Fact Sheet” from the American College of Rheumatology:
<https://www.rheumatology.org/Portals/0/Files/Hydroxychloroquine-Plaquenil-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

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