

Are People with Lupus Protected Against COVID-19?

There is no evidence that taking hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil) is effective in preventing a person from contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19). People with lupus should follow the guidance of their doctor and the safety guidelines being issued by the CDC.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease — that means that the immune system is dysfunctional and attacks one's healthy tissue. This can make the immune system less effective at fighting infections. Medications that suppress the immune system — which people with lupus often take — can also limit their body's ability to respond to infections. As a result, people with lupus are less able to fight off bacteria and viruses, like COVID-19. When people with lupus do get sick their illness may also trigger a lupus flare. People with lupus may also have other conditions that put them at higher risk for serious illness from coronavirus such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and a weakened immune system.

Research on Hydroxychloroquine and COVID-19

Per the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

Hydroxychloroquine is currently under investigation in clinical trials for pre-exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis of SARS-CoV-2 infection, and treatment of patients with mild, moderate, and severe COVID-19. In the United States, several clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis or treatment of SARS-CoV-2 infection are planned or will be enrolling soon. More information on trials can be found at clinicaltrials.gov.

There are no currently available data from Randomized Clinical Trials (RCTs) to inform clinical guidance on the use, dosing, or duration of hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis or treatment of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Global Registry On COVID-19 and Rheumatologic Diseases

The COVID-19 Global Rheumatology Alliance has created a secure, de-identified, international case reporting registry to collect information pertinent to COVID-19 infection in patients with rheumatologic disease. The Lupus

Foundation of America supports the goals of the COVID-19 Global Rheumatology Alliance.

The Lupus Foundation of America supports continued research to investigate the potential use of hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19, but it is imperative to preserve access to this medication for people with lupus whose lives depend on it. Moreover, we also support the continued investigation of hydroxychloroquine in hospitalized patients with COVID-19, but there currently are no data to recommend the use of hydroxychloroquine as a preventive measure against the virus.

For the latest updates on COVID-19 and lupus, visit <https://www.lupus.org/lonestar/coronavirus-updates>.