HU Handbook

The Treatment Scoop on Hydroxyurea

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Who? According to HIV doc Bellman, HU could work for HIVers who are running out of treatment options, suffering from lipodystrophy or other side effects, or are considering a treatment interruption. Cautions Bellman, “It’s not something I use all the time, because more research is needed to define its indications. I use it mainly in patients without good options.”

Dose? HU researcher Lori believes the ideal dose is 600 mg once a day or 300 mg twice a day. Bellman agrees, though he occasionally prescribes 500 mg twice daily. Generally, he administers it with 3TC and Ziagen.

How? HU comes as a generic, and in two BMS formulations: Hydrea (500mg dose) and Droxia (400, 300 and 200 mg doses). For HIVers, HU is considered “off-label” (or unapproved) but is often covered by insurance. “I work at a law firm,” says one HIVer. “My insurance has challenged certain bills, but never HU.” ADAP and BMS’s Access Program (call 877-758-7877) also cover HU. Without insurance, HU costs approximately $125 to $150 for one hundred 500 mg pills.

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