

HU Handbook

The Treatment Scoop on Hydroxyurea

October 1, 2004 By Staff

HU is still experimental for HIVers, so if you think the drug might be for you, talk to Doc first.

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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