

Check your vision regularly

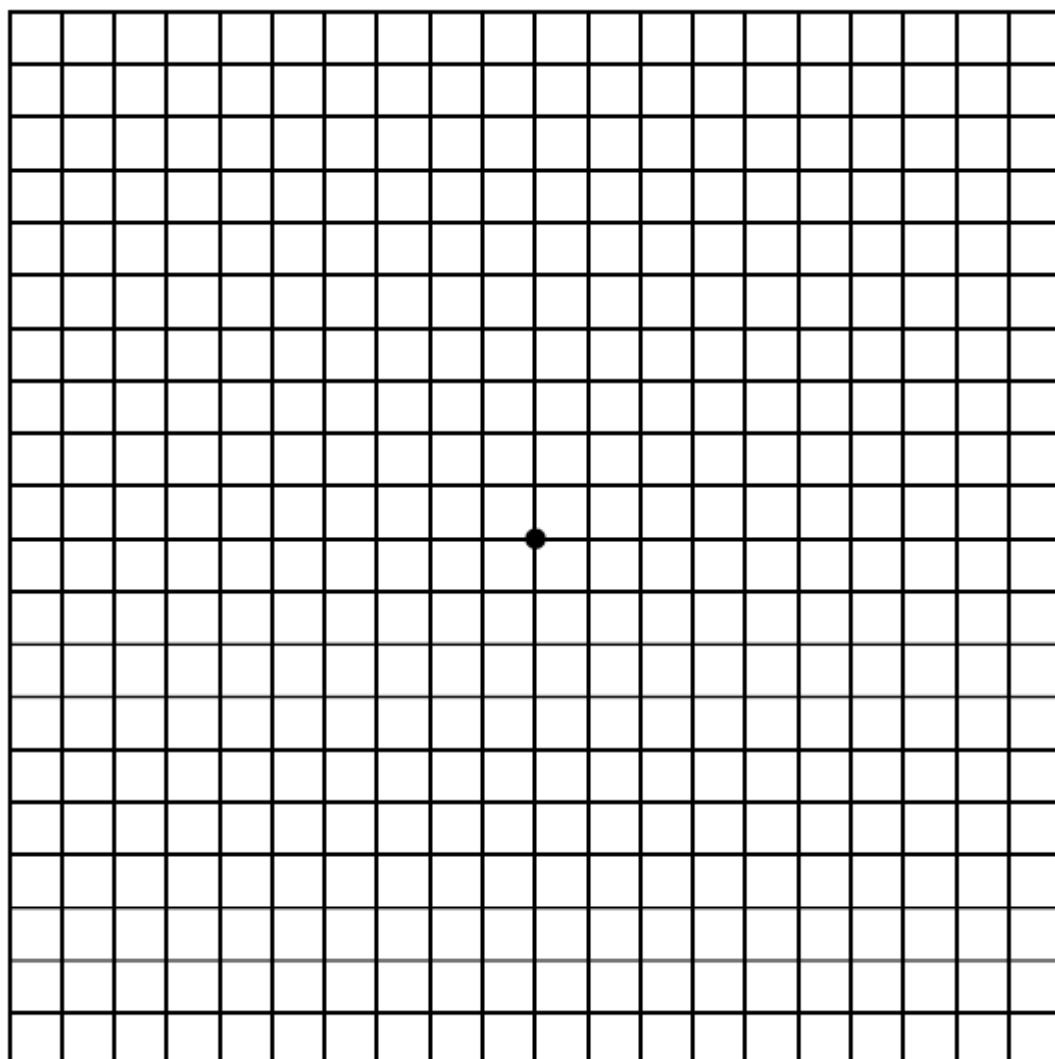
Use this AMSLER grid to check your vision on a regular basis

If you need reading glasses, please wear them. The grid should be roughly the same distance from your eyes as any other reading material would be.

Cover one eye, then focus on the dot in the centre.




- Do any of the lines look **wavy, blurred or distorted**? (All lines should be straight, all intersections should form right angles and all the squares should be the same size.)
- Are there any **missing areas or dark areas** in the grid?
- Can you **see all corners** and sides of the grid?
- Don't forget to **test both eyes**.

VERY IMPORTANT: Report any irregularity to your doctor immediately.



Patient Information

You have been prescribed
Hydroxychloroquine
This is a **daily** medication

	Morning	Evening
Week 1 to 6	 200mg (One Tablet)	 200mg (One Tablet)
Week 7 Onwards	 200mg (One Tablet)	

Continue taking Hydroxychloroquine 200mg until your next appointment.

It may take 12 weeks before you notice any benefit.

You should have an eye test annually with your optician.

**If you have any queries please contact the
Helpline number: 01793 604323**

If you would like this information in another format, i.e. large print or another language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) department on 01793 604031

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Hydroxychloroquine (trade name Plaquenil) is a type of drug known as a disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug. (DMARD). These drugs have the effect of dampening down the underlying disease process, rather than simply treating symptoms.

Hydroxychloroquine is not a pain killer. If you're already on a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) or painkillers you can carry on taking these as well. Hydroxychloroquine does not interact with alcohol.

Why is Hydroxychloroquine prescribed?

It is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and also discoid and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). It can reduce inflammation, pain, swelling and joint stiffness. It may also improve the rash in patients with lupus. Hydroxychloroquine is also used in the treatment of malaria, but it does not prevent malaria. If you're travelling to an area where there's a risk of getting malaria, take advice from you GP about the best drug to use for protection.

Hydroxychloroquine doesn't work immediately. It may be 12 weeks or longer before you notice any benefit.

What are the possible risks or side-effects?

Side-effects are uncommon. However, in some people Hydroxychloroquine can cause the following:

- Skin rashes, especially ones made worse by sunlight
- Nausea or indigestion
- Diarrhoea
- Headaches
- Bleaching of the hair or mild hair loss
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Blurred vision

Very rarely, Hydroxychloroquine may damage the retina (part of the eye). It's advisable to have an eye check with an optician once a year and tell them that you're taking Hydroxychloroquine.

If you develop any new symptoms or there's anything that concerns you after starting Hydroxychloroquine, you should tell your doctor or pharmacist.

Is there any reason I won't be prescribed Hydroxychloroquine?

Hydroxychloroquine won't usually be prescribed if you have existing maculopathy of the eye (problems with the central part of the retina.) It does not usually affect other eye conditions.

When and how do I take Hydroxychloroquine?

Hydroxychloroquine is taken in tablet form, with or after food. Your doctor will advise you about the correct dose. Usually you will start on a full dose of **200- 400mg** daily and later, your doctor may change this.

Can I take other medicines alongside Hydroxychloroquine?

Hydroxychloroquine is commonly given alongside other disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs).

Some drugs interact with Hydroxychloroquine, for example, indigestion remedies (including some over the counter preparations), can stop Hydroxychloroquine being absorbed. It is recommended that you wait at least 4 hours after taking Hydroxychloroquine before you take an indigestion remedy (antacid).

You should discuss any new medications with your doctor before starting them and you should also tell any other doctor treating you that you're taking Hydroxychloroquine.

You can have vaccinations on Hydroxychloroquine.

Don't take over the counter preparations or herbal remedies without discussing this first with your doctor, rheumatology nurse specialist or pharmacist.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Hydroxychloroquine is generally considered to be safe in pregnancy. If you're planning a family or if you become pregnant while taking Hydroxychloroquine, you should discuss this with your doctor as soon as possible.

You can breastfeed if you're on Hydroxychloroquine. Although the drug may pass into the breast milk, this is not likely to have any effect on the baby. The benefits of continuing to take Hydroxychloroquine whilst pregnant or breastfeeding usually outweigh the risks.

Where can I obtain further information?

If you would like any further information about Hydroxychloroquine, or if you have any concerns about your treatment, you should discuss this with your doctor, rheumatology nurse or pharmacist.

Adapted from www.arthritisresearchuk.org