



# Doxycycline

## (Anti-Malarial Medication)

### *What You Need to Know*

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*Deployment Medication Information Sheets (DMIS) are provided by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). Written for soldiers and their families, they provide basic information on deployment medications that are intended as guidance only; consult your health care provider for more information.*

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#### **What is doxycycline?**

- Doxycycline is one of several types of drugs used to prevent malaria. The type of drug prescribed by your health care provider will be based on the area of the world you are traveling to and your medical condition.
- Doxycycline is an antibiotic also used to treat a wide variety of bacterial infections, including the prevention and treatment of anthrax and for the prevention of “traveler’s diarrhea.”

#### **What is malaria?**

Malaria is a serious, but preventable parasitic disease, spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include shivering followed by high fever, which may be accompanied by confusion, headache, and vomiting. If not treated, symptoms can recur at irregular intervals for many years.

#### **How do I take doxycycline?**

- Take each dose with a full glass of water. It is important to ensure good daily water intake while taking this medication.
- Take with food if stomach upset occurs unless your health care provider directs you otherwise.
- Store at room temperature away from sunlight and moisture.
- Antibiotics work best when the amount of medicine in your body is kept at a constant level. Do this by taking the medication at evenly spaced intervals throughout the day and night.
- Continue to take this medication until the fully prescribed amount is finished, even if symptoms disappear after a few days. Stopping therapy too soon may not treat the infection and can lead to active disease.
- Do not share this medication with others.
- Do not donate blood for 3 years after taking it.

#### **What does the military require?**

Doxycycline may be required for duty or deployment in areas where there is a risk of contracting malaria. The use of this anti-malarial medication will be based on the degree and length of exposure and the prevalence of drug resistant strains of the disease in the area(s) of travel and an individual’s health status.

#### **Are there any side effects?**

- You may have an upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea, headache, and vomiting during the first few days as your body adjusts to the medication. If these symptoms persist or become severe, inform your health care provider.
- Doxycycline increases sensitivity to sunlight and may make you more prone to sunburn. Wear protective clothing, limit your sun exposure and use a sunscreen as counter-measures.

- Notify your health care provider if you develop breathing difficulties, skin rash, hives or sore throat while taking this medication.
- Use of this medication for prolonged or repeated periods may result in a secondary infection (e.g., oral, bladder, or vaginal yeast infection).

### **Is there any reason I shouldn't take doxycycline?**

- Tell your health care provider if you have other illnesses or any allergies, especially allergies to drugs.
- Tell your health care provider about all the medicines you take (prescription, nonprescription and herbal), especially if you take other antibiotics. Your dose may need to be adjusted or changed.
- This medicine may decrease the effectiveness of oral contraceptives. Consult your health care provider or pharmacist about other types of birth control.
- Avoid taking antacids, iron preparations, or vitamin products within 2 to 3 hours of taking this medication. These products bind with the medicine preventing its absorption.

### **What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?**

This medicine should not be used during pregnancy or when breast-feeding.

### **What should I do if I miss a dose?**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as remembered unless it is almost time for the next dose. If it is nearly time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do NOT "double-up" on doses.

#### **You *can* avoid getting malaria!**

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites by emptying water collected in outdoor containers or debris.
- Remain in well-screened areas, particularly at dawn, dusk, and early evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito nets.
- Wear loose clothing that covers most of the body.
- Bed nets and tents can also be soaked in or sprayed with permethrin.
- For optimum protection, permethrin treated clothing should be worn with DEET repellents on exposed skin.
- It is also important to consider the use of insect repellent when traveling in environments with biting insects. The repellent should be applied to any exposed areas of the skin. The most effective compound is DEET (N,N-diethyl meta-toluamide), an ingredient in most insect repellents.

**Be sure your medical record shows that you have received this medication.**

### **Where can I get more information?**

- Health care provider at your military treatment facility.
- CDC Specific Disease web site (for malaria): [www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm)

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