

# FDA warns about treating COVID-19 with unproven drugs

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(HealthDay)—Malaria drugs touted by some as potential "game

changers" against COVID-19 are actually too dangerous for general use, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned Americans on Friday.

According to the FDA, studies have shown that the drugs chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine may trigger potentially fatal heart rhythm problems in COVID-19 patients. The agency also said that it is aware of a rise in outpatient prescriptions for the two drugs and said that [health care providers](#) and patients need to be aware of the risks associated with the drugs.

"Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine have not been shown to be safe and effective for treating or preventing COVID-19. They are being studied in clinical trials for COVID-19, and we authorized their temporary use during the COVID-19 pandemic for treatment of the virus in hospitalized patients when [clinical trials](#) are not available, or participation is not feasible," the FDA explained in a news release.

"Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine can cause [abnormal heart rhythms](#) such as QT interval prolongation and a dangerously rapid heart rate called ventricular tachycardia."

"These risks may increase when these medicines are combined with other medicines known to prolong the QT interval, including the antibiotic azithromycin, which is also being used in some COVID-19 patients without FDA approval for this condition. Patients who also have other health issues such as heart and kidney disease are likely to be at increased risk of these heart problems when receiving these medicines," the FDA said.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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