



**Dr Vincent
Karuhanga**
answers your
questions

ASK THE DOCTOR

Dear doctor: I had malaria and I was treated with Quinine. Since that time, my urine as changed colour to pure yellow. I have tried herbs and antibiotics but they have not helped. What can I do?

Santos

My urine has changed colour, what should I do about it?

Dear Santos: Urine consists of water and dissolved waste material from what one has eaten or drunk.

It also includes dead red blood cell contents and other material the body wants to eliminate.

The normal straw colour of urine is due to the yellow pigment that comes from the breakdown of red blood cells.

The less hydrated one's body is the less water that is eliminated in the urine and the more concentrated will be the urine, hence deeper the yellow colour of urine.

This can happen when one has lost more water than he has taken in like when one has sweated too much or had lots of diarrhea but not adequately replaced the lost water.

Also the more the breakdown of the red blood cells the deeper will the urine also be. Conditions like malaria hence will make urine colour deeper.

Liver disease like hepatitis, will also lead to accumulation of yellow pigment and hence a deeper yellow urine.

Quinine in a few unfortunate people may induce increased



breakdown of red blood cells making urine colour so deep as to look black.

The quinine effect however if serious can make one very sick but once one recovers the urine also turns to its normal straw colour unless of course one is not drinking adequate amounts of fluids.

Some antibiotics (or even may be herbs) may turn urine yellow and are not required here except drinking adequately until the urine turns straw.

EXPERTS SAY

Causes. Discolored urine is often caused by medications, certain foods or food dyes. In some cases, though, changes in urine colour may be caused by specific health problems. Whether you react depends on the amount of food or medication you take, your state of hydration, and your own body chemistry.

Source: Mayo Clinic