

# Stavudine (Zerit®)

Capsules: 15, 20, 30 and 40 mg



## How does this medication work?

Stavudine is an antiretroviral drug that acts by preventing multiplication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Stavudine is a nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; it inhibits reverse transcriptase action when the virus enters the host cell. The virus needs reverse transcriptase to multiply in the body.

Stavudine is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs to slow the progression of the disease and reduce the risk of opportunistic infections (AIDS-related infections).

Stavudine does not cure AIDS nor kill the virus. There is a permanent risk of transmitting HIV either through sexual or blood contact. It is therefore essential that precautions always be taken (latex condoms, clean syringes, etc.).

Fertile women must use an effective means of birth control.

## How do I take this medication?

### Stavudine

\_\_\_ capsule(s) of \_\_\_ mg

\_\_\_ times a day

Stavudine may be taken **with or without food**.

It is important to take your antiretroviral medicine properly - i.e. never forget a dose, follow the instructions on how to take the medicine, and always keep on with your treatment.

It is important to take stavudine regularly, at the same time each day, and to keep to this schedule as closely as possible. Adherence to therapy will help prevent **resistance** (HIV's ability to recognize and defeat the effect of the medication) and avoid **treatment failure** (loss of efficacy of the antiretroviral treatment), which would result in an increased viral load and a lower number of CD4 cells, which are the ones that help your body fight infection.

Nearly everyone tends to relax their compliance with the treatment at some point. The key to success is

motivation. Don't hesitate to consult members of your care team so that they can explain the benefits of the treatment you are having. They can also suggest ways that will help you maintain it properly.

*Unless you have serious side effects, never stop your treatment without first speaking to your doctor.*

## What if I forget to take a dose ?

Take the dose you missed as soon as possible and then continue with your regular schedule.

However, if it's nearly time to take the following dose, do not take the missed dose and just take the following one at the usual time.

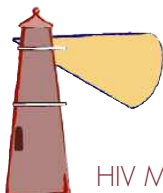
**Do not double up doses.**



## Can I take Stavudine with my other medications?

When combined with stavudine, some drugs can increase the risk of pancreatitis or peripheral neuropathy.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new prescription or non-prescription medication, natural product or recreational drug.



## What are the side effects of this medication ?

Normal reactions which will disappear or can be treated  
**Continue the medication**

- Headache, fatigue



Contact your doctor  
**Continue the medication**

- **Peripheral neuropathy:** numbness, tingling, burning sensation, pain or weakness in the hands or feet



**IMMEDIATELY** see your physician

- **Lactic acidosis:** nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, weight loss, great fatigue, difficulty breathing
- **Pancreatitis:** abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting

**Medical follow-up:** through regular blood tests, your doctor will monitor the effect of this medication on your liver, levels of fat (cholesterol, triglycerides) and sugar (glycemia).

Inform your doctor and pharmacist of any troublesome side effects. They can help you to manage them.

## Can I drink alcohol if I'm on Stavudine ?

Avoid excessive or regular consumption of alcohol (beer, wine or hard liquor), which can increase the risk of hepatitis (liver inflammation) or interact with some of your medications.

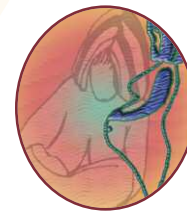


However, do not miss a dose of your medication because you want to have an alcoholic drink. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, reasonable (social) consumption should not damage your health.

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

The effect of stavudine in pregnant women is not yet known. Talk to your doctor if you want to take stavudine and are pregnant or want to become pregnant.

Since the virus can be transmitted through maternal milk, breast-feeding is not recommended in HIV-positive women.



## General advice

Always keep your appointments with your doctor and the care team so that your health can be closely monitored.

If you have any questions about your medications or need help to schedule when to take them, please contact your doctor or pharmacist, who is familiar with what you are taking.

Contact person : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone : \_\_\_\_\_

## Storage

Keep stavudine in a dry place at room temperature.

Avoid storage in bathroom.



Keep this medication in a secure container and out of reach from children.