



Abacavir (ZIAGEN®)

Tablet: 300 mg
Oral solution: 20 mg/mL

How do these medications work?

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

Abacavir is a nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor. It inhibits the reverse transcriptase enzyme. The virus needs this enzyme to multiply in the body.

Abacavir 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).

Abacavir 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?

| Abacavir |
|------------------------------------|
| _____ 300 mg tablet (s) |
| _____ ml of 20 mg/mL oral solution |
| _____ times a day |

Abacavir 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 abacavir 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.

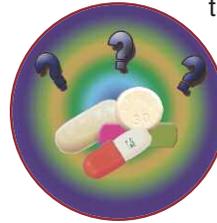
Don't hesitate to consult members of your care team so that they can explain the benefits of the treatment you are having. They can also suggest ways that will help you maintain it properly.

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

Can I take Abacavir with my other medications?

It is unlikely that abacavir will interact with other drugs.

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



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 is nearly time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose and just take the following one at the usual time. **Do not double up doses.**



What are the side effects of these medications?

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

- Headaches, fatigue, nausea



See your doctor **IMMEDIATELY**

Lactic acidosis:

- Nausea, vomiting, stomach pains
- Weight loss, severe fatigue
- Difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat

Hypersensitivity reaction to abacavir :

Rash (redness on the skin) alone or accompanied with symptoms within 2 or more of the following sets:

- 1) Fever
- 2) Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- 3) Severe fatigue, general illness
- 4) Sore throat, shortness of breath, cough.
- 5) Muscles and joint pains

N.B. The symptoms of this reaction generally appear in the first six weeks of abacavir therapy, but may occur at anytime during treatment.

If you think that you may have an hypersensitivity reaction to abacavir, **consult your doctor**.

If you stop taking your medication by yourself due to side effects or a disease, consult your doctor before restarting abacavir. Your doctor will insure that your symptoms are not related to an allergic reaction.

If the abacavir treatment is stopped, never take it again nor any medication containing it such as Kivexa® or Trizivir®.

The solution of abacavir contains sorbitol which may cause abdominal pain and diarrhea to some people. Keep your doctor or pharmacist informed of any side effect causing discomfort so they can help you deal with it.

Can I drink alcohol with Abacavir ?

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.

General advice

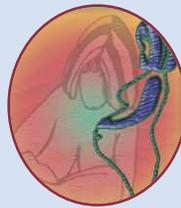
Always keep your appointments with your doctor and

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 : _____

Telephone : _____



What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?

The effect of abacavir in pregnant women is not yet known. Talk to your doctor if you want to take abacavir 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.

Storage

Keep abacavir tablets in a dry place at room temperature (15-30°C or 59-86°F). Avoid wet areas such as bathroom.

Keep abacavir oral solution at room temperature (15-25°C or 59-77°F).



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