

Lamivudine/zidovudine (Combivir®)

Tablet : 150 mg lamivudine and 300 mg zidovudine



How does this medication work?

Combivir® is a combination of two antiretroviral drugs, lamivudine (3TC) and zidovudine (AZT), that act by preventing multiplication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Lamivudine and zidovudine are nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. They act by inhibiting the reverse transcriptase enzyme. The virus needs this enzyme to multiply in the body.

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

Combivir® 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?

| Combivir® |
|-------------|
| 1 tablet |
| Twice daily |

Combivir® 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 Combivir® 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.

Your hepatitis can get worse if you are a hepatitis B carrier and stop taking Combivir®. The lamivudine component of Combivir® also treats hepatitis B.

Unless you are having 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.**

Can I take Combivir® with my other medications?

Some drugs can increase blood-component side effects when combined with Combivir®.

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 these medications?



Normal reactions which will disappear or can be treated

Continue the medication

- Nausea, headache, insomnia, fatigue, muscle pain
- Vomiting, stomach pains



Contact your doctor
Continue the medication

- **Anemia** : fatigue, shortness of breath, palpitations (heart beat), pale skin.

See your doctor **IMMEDIATELY**

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



Medical follow-up

Your doctor will monitor your bilirubin level by taking regular blood tests.

Keep your doctor or pharmacist informed of any side effect causing discomfort so they can help you deal with it.

Can I drink alcohol if I'm on Combivir®?



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

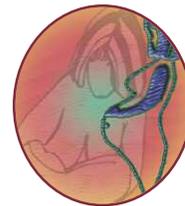
Contact person : _____

Telephone : _____

What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?

Combivir® can be taken during pregnancy.

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



Storage

Keep Combivir® in a dry place at room temperature (15-30°C or 59-86°F). Avoid storage in bathroom.



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