

## Saquinavir (Invirase®)

Tablet: 500 mg



## Ritonavir (Norvir®)

Tablet: 100 mg



### How do these medications work?

Ritonavir and saquinavir are antiretroviral drugs that act by preventing multiplication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Ritonavir and saquinavir are viral protease inhibitors. They act by strongly inhibiting the development of new viral particles.

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

Saquinavir and ritonavir do 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 these medications?

#### Saquinavir

\_\_\_ tablet(s) of 500 mg \_\_\_ time(s) a day

#### Ritonavir

\_\_\_ tablet(s) of 100 mg \_\_\_ time(s) a day

Saquinavir and ritonavir must be taken together **with food (light meal or snack)**.

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 saquinavir and ritonavir 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 Saquinavir and Ritonavir with my other medications?

#### • Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

Ritonavir can decrease the efficacy of oral contraceptives. Additional protective measures, such as latex condoms, are recommended.

#### • St. John's wort

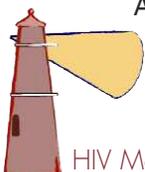
St. John's wort can decrease the efficacy of ritonavir and saquinavir and possibly allow the virus to develop resistance. Do not take St. John's wort while you are taking ritonavir and saquinavir.

#### • Sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®), vardenafil (Levitra®)

Atazanavir and ritonavir can increase the risk of side effects associated with these drugs and the dose of these drugs should be reduced.

Ritonavir and saquinavir may interact with other medications or street drugs (Valium®, Demerol®, "Ecstasy", etc.).

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**



- Diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pains
- Fatigue, headache
- Muscle pain

See your doctor **IMMEDIATELY**

### **Hepatitis symptoms (liver inflammation)**

- Pale or fatty stools, abdominal or stomach pains, loss of appetite
- Dark urine, jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
- Fatigue, weakness
- Severe itchininess

If you are a carrier of hepatitis B or C, you are at higher risk of liver problems.

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

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

## What if I forget to take a dose?



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.**

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

## Can I drink alcohol with Saquinavir and Ritonavir?

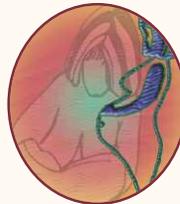
Avoid excessive or regular consumption of alcohol (beer, wine or hard liquor), which can increase the risk

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 combination of saquinavir and ritonavir is recommended for pregnant women.

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 : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone : \_\_\_\_\_

## Storage

Keep saquinavir and ritonavir in a dry place at room temperature (15-30 °C or 59-86 °F).

Avoid storage in bathrooms.

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

