

Abacavir (Ziagen™)

Patient Information Leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Abacavir. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

What is Ziagen™ used for?

Abacavir is an anti-retroviral agent that makes viruses less infectious. It is used to decrease the amount of viruses (viral load) to as low as possible, for as long as possible.

When should I take the medication?

Abacavir can be taken once or twice daily. The dose is usually determined based on patient's body weight. It is usually given in combination with other anti-retroviral agents to achieve significant decrease in viral multiplication.

How should it be taken?

Abacavir can be taken with or without food. Remember to swallow the tablet whole.

Alternatively, it can be crushed and added to small amounts of semi-solid food or liquid and administer immediately.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Missing doses of the medication make Abacavir less effective and may also make the virus resistant to Abacavir and possibly other antiretroviral agents. This could make the virus harder to treat.

If you forgot to give your child the medication, give the dose as soon as you remember and then continue to give it at the usual timing. Otherwise, if it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and give the next dose at the usual time. Do not double or increase the dose.

What side effects can this medicine cause? What can I do about them?

Common side effects that may occur are:

- Stomach discomfort, nausea and/or vomiting. Eating small frequent meals or sucking on hard, sugar-free candy may help to reduce these side effects.
- Fever, feeling tired. Taking paracetamol or ibuprofen can help reduce the fever.
- Headache or muscle aches. Taking painkillers e.g. paracetamol can help to reduce the pain.
- Loose stools.
- Change in body fat. Fat accumulation around the waist and sometimes accompanied by thinning of legs, arms, buttocks and face.

Inform your doctor if the side effects become severe and bothersome.

Hypersensitivity reaction (fever, worsening of cough or breathlessness, severe abdominal pain, severe diarrhea and/or vomiting, rashes) can occur at any time during treatment with Abacavir, especially during the first 6 weeks of treatment initiation. Inform your doctor immediately if these signs and symptoms appear or become severe. These symptoms will usually resolve upon discontinuation of medication.

Abacavir may also affect the cholesterol level and liver enzymes level. Your doctor will routinely monitor the levels prior to the treatment initiation and while your child is on this medication.

Other precautions:

Some medication may reduce its efficacy or increase its toxicity. Do not give your child any other medications or herbal products without first consulting your doctor.

Storage:

To be stored at room temperature, not above 30 °C.



Last Review: 01/09/2013

Produced by Department of Pharmacy
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