



**The Information Exchange**

St. Stephen's Centre  
369 Fulham Road  
London SW10 9NH

Tel: +44 (0) 20 3315 5929

Fax: +44 (0) 20 3315 5595

E-mail: [infoex@chelwest.nhs.uk](mailto:infoex@chelwest.nhs.uk)

[www.ststephensvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.ststephensvolunteers.org.uk)

## ATAZANAVIR (Reyataz<sup>®</sup>)

Please read this factsheet together with the patient information leaflet carefully before taking your medicine. If you have any questions or are unsure about anything, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

**Atazanavir**, also known as Reyataz<sup>®</sup>, belongs to a class of drugs called **protease inhibitors (PIs)**. Protease Inhibitors are used for the treatment of HIV infection, in combination with other anti-HIV drugs. Please speak to your clinic doctor or pharmacist if you would like more information about how these drugs work.

### Before taking atazanavir

Tell your doctor about:

- All other drugs that you are taking, including any that you buy over the counter in a community pharmacy, herbal medicines and recreational drugs.
- Previous allergy to any medicines.
- If you have ever had any liver disease.
- If you have ever had any kidney problems.
- If you are pregnant / planning to become pregnant.
- If you are breast feeding.
- If you are diabetic.
- If you are a haemophiliac

### Taking your atazanavir

- Atazanavir is available as 300mg and 200mg capsules. The 200mg capsules are blue and 300mg capsules are red and blue.
- Atazanavir is taken once a day. It is normally taken in combination with ritonavir which boosts the amount of atazanavir in the body, making it more effective.
- The recommended dose is 300mg (1 x 300mg capsules) once a day and one ritonavir capsule (100mg) taken at the same time, once a day. Some patients may take 400mg (2 x 200mg capsules) once a day without ritonavir.
- You should always take atazanavir with food. This helps the drug to be absorbed from the stomach. Do not open the capsules, always swallow them whole.
- Try to take your atazanavir as close as possible to twenty four hours apart, at the same time each day. It is essential that you do not miss your daily dose. If you do miss a dose take it as soon as you remember, but DO NOT double-up the next dose.

Do not run out of atazanavir. If you are going on holiday and need additional supplies, tell your doctor. When receiving a supply from pharmacy, ensure that you have an adequate supply to last until your next appointment.

### Other drugs and atazanavir

Atazanavir is metabolised (processed in the body) by the liver. Some other drugs are metabolised in the same way. This is why it is important to tell your doctor about all the medicines that you take even if you only take them occasionally, including herbal and recreational drugs.

Examples of some drugs that are metabolised in the same way as atazanavir and should **NOT** be taken are rifampicin, phenytoin, carbamazepine, simvastatin, terfenadine, ergotamine, certain benzodiazepines and St. Johns Wort. Other examples of drugs that are metabolised in the same way as atazanavir include rifabutin, warfarin, methadone, drugs for erectile dysfunction (e.g. Viagra<sup>®</sup>), non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors such as efavirenz or nevirapine, and other protease inhibitors. Your doctor may alter your doses if you are taking one of these drugs. Atazanavir can stop certain hormonal contraceptives from working effectively, and you may need to use an alternative or additional form of contraception, e.g. barrier methods. Discuss this with your clinic doctor

Acid lowering agent (e.g. proton pump inhibitors and ranitidine) should be taken with caution with atazanavir. This is because atazanavir requires an acid environment to be absorbed, and these medicines lower the amount of acid that is present in the stomach. When taking a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) your doctor may increase your dose of atazanavir to 400mg, your PPI dose should not exceed a dose equivalent to 20mg of omeprazole.

When taken with an **H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonist (e.g. Ranitidine)** the dosing of the two medications must **either be separated or the dose of atazanavir may be increased to 400mg. When separating the dose, atazanavir with ritonavir should be taken 2 hours before or at least 10 hours following the administration of an H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonist.** If you are taking antacids (for indigestion) or the chewable tablet formulation of didanosine, take atazanavir at least two hours before or one hour afterwards.

### Side effects

Atazanavir, like all other medicines has some side effects. The most important ones affecting more than 1 in 100 patients are:

- Yellowing of the skin or eyes. This may be caused by a build up of bilirubin (a chemical produced by the liver) in the blood (hyperbilirubinaemia). This is thought to be harmless but inform your doctor if this occurs.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Headache.
- Rash.
- Diarrhoea.

Combination regimes containing protease inhibitors have been associated with redistribution of body fat in some patients. They are also associated with abnormalities such as raised cholesterol, increased risk of diabetes and heart disease. Clinical trials so far have shown that this is less of a problem with atazanavir compared to other protease inhibitors; however your clinic doctor will monitor you for all of these.

If you experience any of these side effects or any new symptoms after you start atazanavir, tell your doctor who will advise you on what to do. If you decide to stop atazanavir it is important you tell your doctor so that he or she can discuss other treatment options with you.

### Admission to hospital

If you are admitted to hospital please bring all your medicines with you. This is so the nurses can continue to give them to you on the ward. This is especially important for anti-HIV drugs, as they have to be taken regularly.

### Storing your atazanavir

Atazanavir should be stored at room temperature. Do not store in damp place e.g. bathroom cabinet.

This information was prepared by the HIV/GUM pharmacy department at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. If you have any queries regarding the information, please call Kobler Pharmacist on 020 3315 5604

Updated January 2011