



The Information Exchange

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DARUNAVIR (Prezista[®])

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

Darunavir belongs to a class of drugs called **protease inhibitors (PIs)**. PIs 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. Darunavir is also known as Prezista or DRV.

Before taking darunavir

Tell your doctor about:

- All other drugs you are taking, including any that you buy over the counter in a community pharmacy and any herbal medicines or recreational drugs.
- Previous allergy to any medicines including sulphonamides for example co-trimoxazole (Septrin[®])
- If you have ever had any liver disease.
- If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.
- If you are diabetic.
- If you are a haemophiliac

Taking your darunavir

- Darunavir is available as an orange film-coated oval-shaped tablet with 400mg or 600mg written on one side and TMC114 on the other containing 400mg or 600mg of darunavir.
- The recommended dose of darunavir if treatment has failed for you in the past is 600mg (1 tablet) twice daily plus 100mg (1 tablet) ritonavir twice daily taken with food.
- The recommended dose if you have never taken a protease inhibitor before is 800mg (2 tablets) once a day plus 100mg (1 tablet) ritonavir once daily with food.
- Darunavir must be taken with ritonavir which boosts the amount of darunavir in the body, making it more effective.
- You should always take darunavir with food. This helps the drug to be absorbed from the stomach. Swallow the tablet whole. Do not crush, break or chew it.
- The 600mg twice daily dose should be spaced evenly throughout the day: try to take the doses as close as possible to twelve hours apart, and at the same times each day.
- The 800mg once daily dose should be taken every 24 hours and at the same time each day.
- Darunavir, like all antiretrovirals, works best if there is a constant amount in your bloodstream. It is therefore very important to take the tablets regularly. If you forget a dose take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose anyway, forget about the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose.

Do not run out of darunavir. 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 darunavir/ritonavir

Darunavir and ritonavir are 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 other drugs (including inhalers) that you are taking, including any that you have on prescription, buy over the counter in your community pharmacy, herbal medicines and recreational drugs. Examples of some drugs that are metabolised in the same way as darunavir boosted with ritonavir and should **NOT** be taken are rifampicin, phenytoin, phenobarbital, simvastatin, ergotamine, and St. Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).

Other examples of drugs that are metabolised in the same way as darunavir boosted with ritonavir include rifabutin, carbamazepine, warfarin, methadone, drugs for erectile dysfunction (e.g. Viagra[®]), some drugs that treat depression, efavirenz, nevirapine, fluticasone, tacrolimus, ciclosporin, other protease inhibitors, medicines for heart rhythm problems (e.g. digoxin, amiodarone), medicines to treat a fungal infection (such as itraconazole or ketoconazole) and certain blood pressure medicines. Your doctor may alter your doses if you are taking one of these drugs. Darunavir 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.

Side effects

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

- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain, constipation, flatulence, abdominal distension, dyspepsia, diarrhoea
- Rash
- Headache, dizziness

Combination regimens containing protease inhibitors have been associated with redistribution of body fat in some patients. They are also associated with abnormalities such as raised cholesterol, raised triglycerides, increased risk of diabetes and heart disease. This collection of side effects are often called 'lipodystrophy' and your clinic doctor will monitor you for all of these.

If you experience any of these side effects or any other new symptoms after starting darunavir, tell your doctor who will advise you what to do. If you decide to stop taking darunavir it is important that 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 darunavir

Darunavir should be stored at room temperature.

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

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