



The Information Exchange

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EMTRICITABINE (Emtriva[®])

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.

Emtricitabine, also known as **Emtriva[®]** or **FTC**, belongs to a class of drugs called **nucleoside analogues or nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs)**. NRTIs are used in 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 emtricitabine

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 kidney disease.
- If you have ever had any liver disease

Taking your emtricitabine

- Emtricitabine is a hard capsule with a white opaque body with a light blue opaque cap containing 200mg emtricitabine and a liquid containing 10mg emtricitabine per ml.
- The recommended dose is 200mg (one capsule) once a day. If you are taking the liquid formulation the dose is 240mg (20mls) once a day, this is because the liquid form is not absorbed from the stomach as well as the capsule.
- You can take emtricitabine before, with or after food.
- Emtricitabine works best if there is a constant amount in your bloodstream. It is therefore very important to take the doses regularly. Try taking the dose as close as possible to twenty four hours apart, at the same time each day. 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 emtricitabine. 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 emtricitabine

Lamivudine (3TC) should not be used in combination with emtricitabine.

Side Effects

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

- Feeling sick (nausea) and vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Rash or changes in skin colour
- Dizziness
- Insomnia
- Muscle pain and weakness

Lactic acidosis, a chemical disturbance of the blood, has been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues. Inform your doctor if you experience the following symptoms: nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, weight loss, rapid, deep breathing or muscle weakness.

If you experience any of these side effects or any other new symptoms after you start emtricitabine, tell your doctor who will advise you what to do. If you decide to stop taking emtricitabine 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 emtricitabine

Emtricitabine 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 Pharmacy on 020 3315 5604

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