



The Information Exchange

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KIVEXA[®] (Abacavir and Lamivudine)

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

KIVEXA is a preparation that contains both **abacavir** and **lamivudine** in one tablet. Abacavir and lamivudine both belong to a class of drugs called **nucleoside analogues** or **nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs)**. NRTIs 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 Kivexa

Tell your doctor about:

- All other drugs that you are taking, including any that you buy over the counter in a community pharmacy and herbal medicines
- Any previous allergy to any other medicines
- If you have ever had any liver disease
- If you have ever had any kidney disease

Taking your Kivexa

- Kivexa is available as an orange tablet with GSFC2 written on one side, containing 600mg of abacavir and 300mg of lamivudine.
- The usual dose is one tablet once a day.
- There is no effect of food upon absorption; therefore you can take the tablets before, with or after food. Taking doses after food may help prevent nausea.
- If you need to take a lower dose of abacavir or lamivudine, for example, if you have reduced kidney function, Kivexa is not suitable for you. Your doctor will prescribe abacavir and lamivudine separately.
- Try to take Kivexa as close to twenty-four hours apart as possible, at the same time each day.
- Kivexa 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 Kivexa. 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 Kivexa

Abacavir does not seem to interfere with other drugs in tests done so far. However, some drugs may interfere with other antiretrovirals that you may be on as part of your combination, so please inform your doctor or pharmacist of any other medication, herbal remedies or recreational drugs that you are taking.

Lamivudine should not be used in combination with emtricitabine (FTC)

Side effects

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

Abacavir	Lamivudine
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Loss of appetite▪ Diarrhoea▪ Nausea and vomiting▪ Lethargy and fatigue▪ Fever▪ Headache▪ Rash without other symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Headache▪ Tiredness▪ Nausea▪ Vomiting▪ Diarrhoea▪ Abdominal pain or cramps▪ Insomnia

Some of these side effects last a short period of time, if you experience any of these side effects or any other symptoms after you start Kivexa, tell your doctor who will advise you what to do. Do NOT stop taking your Kivexa without consulting your doctor first. It is important that you tell your doctor so that he or she can discuss other treatment options with you.

In the experience to date with abacavir approximately 1 in 20 patients have developed an allergic or hypersensitivity reaction. This usually happens within the first six weeks of treatment, although these reactions may occur at any time during therapy. The HLA B5701 genetic test identifies patients most at risk for abacavir-related hypersensitivity reactions although you could still have a reaction even if this test was negative.

YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY for advice if:

1. You get a skin rash OR
2. You get one or more symptoms from at least two of the following groups:
 - fever
 - shortness of breath, sore throat or cough
 - nausea or vomiting or diarrhoea or abdominal pain
 - severe tiredness or aching joints or general ill feeling

Remember to carry the alert card (from the medication package) around with you at all times

You should NOT stop taking abacavir without first speaking to your doctor. If you do stop abacavir due to this reaction you must never take abacavir again. There have been reports of more serious reactions in people who have stopped abacavir and then restarted after the symptoms disappeared.

During working hours contact your doctor or the Kobler Pharmacy on 020 3315 6126 or after hours, Thomas Macauley Ward, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital on 020 3315 8540.

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

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 medications as they need to be taken regularly.

Storing your Kivexa

Kivexa tablets 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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