



The Information Exchange

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TRIZIVIR[®] (Abacavir, Lamivudine and Zidovudine)

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.

Trizivir is a preparation that contains zidovudine, lamivudine and abacavir in one tablet. Zidovudine, lamivudine and abacavir all belong to a class of drugs called **nucleoside analogues** or **nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors** (NRTIs). Nucleoside analogues are used for the treatment of HIV infection. Please speak to your clinic doctor or pharmacist if you would like more information about how these drugs work.

Before taking Trizivir:

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
- Any previous reaction to abacavir
- Any previous allergy to any other medicines
- If you have ever had any liver disease
- If you have ever had any kidney disease
- If you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant

Taking your Trizivir

- Trizivir is available as a blue/green tablet, containing 300mg of zidovudine, 150mg of lamivudine and 300mg of abacavir.
- The usual dose is one tablet twice each day.
- If you need to take a lower dose of zidovudine or lamivudine e.g. if you have reduced kidney function, Trizivir is not suitable for you. Your doctor will prescribe each drug separately.
- The doses should be divided equally throughout the day: try to take the doses as close as possible to twelve hours apart, and at the same times each 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 - this is usually due to zidovudine and may occur when you first start taking Trizivir.
- Trizivir 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. Do not run out of Trizivir. If you are going on holiday and need additional supplies - tell your doctor. When receiving your supply from pharmacy, ensure that you have an adequate supply to last until your next appointment

Other drugs and Trizivir

There are some cautions and contra-indications to the individual components of Trizivir. It is therefore 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.

Zidovudine

Due to its effect on your bone marrow, zidovudine can decrease some of your blood cells. Some other drugs used in HIV disease can also do this, for example ganciclovir and co-trimoxazole. Your doctor may decide to change some of your other medicines after starting zidovudine. Zidovudine should NOT be taken with rifampicin as it decreases the levels of zidovudine in your blood. Zidovudine should not be taken in combination with Stavudine (D4T)

Lamivudine

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

Side effects

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

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

Some of these side effects may occur when you first start taking Trizivir and frequently disappear after 4 or 5 weeks of treatment. If you experience any of these side effects or any other symptoms after you start Trizivir, tell your doctor who will advise you what to do. If you decide to stop taking Trizivir, 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.

Combination antiretroviral therapy, in particular Zidovudine, has been associated with redistribution of body fat (lipodystrophy), including the loss of fat on the face, arms and legs and increased abdominal and back fat. If you experience these side effects tell you doctor who will advise you what to do.

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, 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 Trizivir

Trizivir 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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