

Atripla[®]

(efavirenz, emtricitabine, and tenofovir)

This leaflet is designed to give you a general idea of the most important things you need to know about your new medicine. It is not supposed to replace the patient information leaflet (PIL) that comes with the medicine, but is designed to be read in conjunction with it. If you have any questions or are unsure about anything, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What is Atripla?

Atripla is a combination pill containing three drugs, efavirenz, emtricitabine and tenofovir.

Efavirenz belongs to a group of antiretroviral drugs called non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs), or 'non-nukes'.

Emtricitabine and tenofovir are known as nucleotide/nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs), or 'nukes'.

The three drugs are used in combination for the treatment of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Please speak to your clinic doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you would like more information about how these drugs work.

How should I take Atripla?

The recommended dose is one tablet once daily, on an empty stomach (2 hours after food). Taking Atripla with food doesn't affect how the medicines work. However, you may experience more side effects, such as dizziness, or drowsiness, if you take Atripla with food.

When should I take Atripla?

Most people find it is best to take Atripla just before they go to bed. This helps reduce the impact of some of the side effects, especially during the first few weeks.

What are the common side effects with Atripla?

Atripla, like all other medicines, has some side effects. Most of these are minor and will settle within a few days or weeks. Make sure you read the leaflet that came with Atripla for a complete list.

- 'Head' side effects: Dizziness/light headiness, headache, insomnia, vivid (real-feeling) dreams. If you feel dizzy or drowsy, you must not drive or operate machinery. Atripla can sometimes cause changes in your mood, including feeling worried, depressed or angry. Speak to your doctor about this.
- 'Stomach' side effects: Feeling sick (nausea), vomiting, diarrhoea.
- Changes in blood test: Changes in some of your liver or kidney tests, or changes in cholesterol.
- Other side effects including rash, weakness, tiredness.

If you experience any side effects, and either they are troubling you or you develop any new symptoms after you start Atripla, tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist who will tell you what to do.

If you decide to take stop taking Atripla, it is important that you tell your doctor first so that they can discuss other treatment options with you.

If you have a question about Atripla or any of your medicines, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Contact: kobler.pharmacy@chelwest.nhs.uk

Telephone: 020 3315 5604

What medicines should I avoid with Atripla?

It is always important to make your doctor and pharmacist aware of any medicines you take, including herbal, complementary or over the counter medicines to ensure that they are compatible with Atripla. Make sure you read the patient information leaflet you received with Atripla for a full list, but always tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following before you take either Atripla or the new medicine:

Medicine	Why do your doctor & pharmacist need to know about this?
Cholesterol medicines called statins	Atripla can reduce the amount of statins in your blood. Your clinic doctor will help choose the right statin for you.
Inhalers or nasal sprays	Some inhalers and nasal sprays contain steroids which can build up in your body if taken with certain antiretrovirals, leading to side effects. Speak to your clinic doctor or pharmacist before using any inhalers or nasal sprays.
St John's wort for depression	This can reduce the levels of the drugs contained in Atripla within your body, meaning it may be less effective at suppressing the virus.
Calcium or iron supplements, multivitamins, or other indigestion remedies	Medicines or supplements containing calcium, iron, magnesium, or aluminium can stop you from absorbing some antiretrovirals properly. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any of these.
Contraceptives (birth control)	Atripla can reduce the amount of contraceptive in your body, making it less effective. Your clinic will help choose the right method of contraception for you.

What if I:

Get a headache or just need a pain killer?

Paracetamol can be taken with Atripla. Ibuprofen can also be taken, as long as you don't have any problems such as stomach ulcers or asthma, or unless your doctor has advised you to avoid NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) for any reason.

Get hayfever or have other allergies?

The antihistamines cetirizine and chlorphenamine can be taken with Atripla. If your allergy is related to Atripla (such as a rash) or any other medicines, speak to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medicines. You should speak to your doctor or pharmacist before using any nasal sprays or getting any injections, to check for possible interactions with Atripla and any other medicines you are taking.

Get diarrhoea?

For short-term diarrhoea relief, you can use loperamide. Remember to drink plenty of fluids. If you get a lot of diarrhoea and it lasts more than a few days, contact your clinic to ask for advice.

Get heartburn, reflux, indigestion or need medicines for stomach ulcers?

Antacids and proton pump inhibitors (used to treat stomach ulcers) can be taken with Atripla but may affect other antiretrovirals such as raltegravir, dolutegravir or elvitegravir, so you should check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking them.

Am prescribed or take something for my mood, such as an antidepressant or St John's wort?

Check with your clinic doctor or pharmacist before taking these. St John's wort can reduce the levels of some antiretrovirals within your body, meaning they may be less effective at suppressing the virus

Currently take, or would like to take supplements, including calcium or iron, or any herbal medicines?

Most supplements can be taken with Atripla, but always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking them. However, if you also take the antiretrovirals atazanavir, raltegravir, dolutegravir or elvitegravir, check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking the supplement.

Miss my Atripla!

Antiretrovirals work best if there is a constant amount of the drugs in your body. It is really important that you take them regularly. However, occasionally you may forget a dose. Don't worry if this happens, just follow the guidance below. If you are having problems remembering to take your medicines speak with your clinic now and they may be able to help you.

- If you notice **within 12 hours** of the time you usually take Atripla, you must take the tablet as soon as possible. Then take the next dose as usual.
- If you notice **12 hours or more after** the time you usually take Atripla, then do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at your usual time.
- **Never** take a double dose to make up for missing one.