

Darunavir (Prezista®)

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 darunavir?

Darunavir belongs to a group of antiretroviral drugs called protease inhibitors, often referred to as 'PIs'.

Darunavir is used in combination with other antiretrovirals for the treatment of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Most people will need to take darunavir with another drug, either ritonavir or cobicistat. Ritonavir and cobicistat are a type of drug called a 'pharmacokinetic enhancer' which boosts levels of darunavir in your body. Without ritonavir or cobicistat, darunavir will not be effective at controlling the virus.

Please speak to your clinic doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you would like more information about how these drugs work.

How should I take darunavir?

There are different doses of darunavir. The most common dose is one 800mg tablet to be taken with one ritonavir 100mg tablet or one cobicistat 150mg tablet once daily with food. Some patients may need to take a higher dose of darunavir or need to take it twice a day so always check with your clinician or pharmacist if you are unsure.

How much food do I need to take with darunavir?

There are no specific types or amounts of food that need to be taken with darunavir. You can take darunavir with a substantial snack, or up to 30 minutes after a main meal.

What are the common side effects with darunavir?

Darunavir, 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 darunavir for a complete list. Some examples of the most common side effects are listed below;

- 'Stomach' side effects: Feeling sick (nausea), being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea, stomach pain or discomfort, indigestion.
- 'Head' side effects: Headache.
- Changes in blood test: Changes in some of your liver or kidney tests, or changes in cholesterol.
- Other side effects: Rash.

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

If you decide to take stop taking darunavir, 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 darunavir 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 darunavir?

It is always important to make your doctor and pharmacist aware of all medicines you take, including herbal, complementary or over the counter medicines to ensure that they are compatible with darunavir and your other antiretrovirals. Make sure you read the patient information leaflet you received with darunavir for a more detailed list. Always tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following before you take either darunavir or the new medicine as not all drug interactions will be listed on the leaflet:

Medicine	Why do your doctor & pharmacist need to know about this?
Cholesterol medicines called statins	Some statins are affected by darunavir which may lead to more side effects. 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 darunavir, leading to side effects. Your clinic pharmacist or doctor will be able to advise you on alternative options
St John's wort for depression	This can reduce the levels of darunavir within your body, meaning it may be less effective at suppressing the virus and so is not recommended to be taken with darunavir
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)	Some antiretrovirals 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 darunavir. 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, loratidine and chlorphenamine can be taken with darunavir. If your allergy is related to darunavir (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 darunavir 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 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 darunavir, but may affect other antiretrovirals such as rilpivirine, raltegravir, dolutegravir or elvitegravir. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking them in combination with these drugs.

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?

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

Miss my darunavir!

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 to take 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 your dose of darunavir is **800mg ONCE** daily: If you notice **within 12 hours** of the time you usually take darunavir, you must take the tablet as soon as possible. Always take the tablet with food and with a dose of ritonavir or cobicistat (even if you have already taken ritonavir or cobicistat at the right time). Then take the next dose as usual. If you notice **12 hours or more after** the time you usually take darunavir, then do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose, with food, at your usual time.
- If your dose of darunavir is **600mg TWICE** daily: If you notice **within 6 hours** of the time you usually take darunavir, you must take the tablet as soon as possible. Always take the tablet with food and with a dose of ritonavir or cobicistat (even if you have already taken ritonavir or cobicistat at the right time). Then take the next dose as usual. If you notice **6 hours or more after** the time you usually take darunavir, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose, with food, at your usual time.
- **Never** take a double dose to make up for missing one.