

Kivexa[®]

(abacavir and lamivudine)

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 Kivexa?

Kivexa is a combination tablet containing two drugs, abacavir (600mg) and lamivudine (300mg), which are both antiretrovirals of a type known as nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) or 'nukes'.

The two drugs are used in combination with at least one other drug 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 Kivexa?

The recommended dose is one tablet once daily. It does not matter if you take Kivexa with or without food. It does not matter what time of the day you take Kivexa, as long as you stick to taking it about the same time each day.

What are the common side effects with Kivexa?

Kivexa, 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 Kivexa for a complete list.

IMPORTANT: Some people may develop a type of serious allergic reaction to Kivexa called a hypersensitivity reaction. It is very important that you read the alert card and the patient information leaflet from the Kivexa packaging, and discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist, before taking Kivexa. Before you start Kivexa your doctor will order a blood test called a 'HLA-B*5701' which can help predict those most likely to have a hypersensitivity reaction. If the HLA-B*5701 test is positive your doctor will not recommend you take Kivexa.

It cannot be excluded that abacavir may increase the risk of having a heart attack. Tell your doctor if you have heart problems, if you smoke, or if you have other conditions – such as high blood pressure or diabetes – that may increase your risk of heart disease. You and your doctor can discuss your treatment options and your individual risk associated with Kivexa. Don't stop taking Kivexa unless your doctor advises you to do so.

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

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 Kivexa and any other antiretroviral drugs you are taking. Make sure you read the patient information leaflet you received with Kivexa and the other antiretrovirals for a full list, but always tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following before you take either Kivexa and any other antiretrovirals or the new medicine:

| Medicine | Why do your doctor & pharmacist need to know about this? |
|---|---|
| Cholesterol medicines called statins | Some antiretrovirals can either increase or reduce the amount of statins in your blood. Your HIV 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 some antiretroviral drugs, leading to side effects |
| St John's wort for depression | This can reduce the levels of some antiretrovirals 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) | 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 Kivexa. 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 Kivexa. If your allergy is related to Kivexa or your other antiretrovirals (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 Kivexa, your other antiretrovirals 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 or medicines such as omeprazole, lansoprazole or ranitidine can be taken with Kivexa. However, it is always important to double check with your doctor or pharmacist, especially if you are taking other antiretrovirals such as atazanavir, rilpivirine, raltegravir, dolutegravir or elvitegravir.

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

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

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.

Miss my Kivexa!

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 Kivexa, 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 Kivexa, 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.