

Raltegravir (Isentress®)

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 raltegravir?

Raltegravir is a type of antiretroviral called an integrase inhibitor.

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

How should I take raltegravir?

The recommended dose is one 400mg tablet twice each day (every 12 hours).

Do I need to take raltegravir with food?

No. Raltegravir can be taken with or without food.

What are the common side effects with raltegravir?

Raltegravir, 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 raltegravir for a complete list.

- 'Stomach' side effects: Feeling sick (nausea), vomiting, bloating, diarrhoea, decreased appetite.
- 'Head' side effects: Dizziness/light headiness, headache, trouble sleeping and abnormal dreams.
- Changes in blood test: Changes in some of your liver 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 raltegravir, tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist who will tell you what to do.

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

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

Medicine	Why does 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 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.
St John's wort for depression	This can reduce the levels of certain antiretrovirals within your body, meaning they may be less effective at suppressing the virus.
Calcium or iron supplements, multivitamins, or other indigestion remedies	Medicines or supplements containing iron, magnesium, or aluminium can stop you from absorbing raltegravir properly so should not be taken. Calcium should be taken at least 4 hours before or after raltegravir.
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 raltegravir. 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 raltegravir. If your allergy is related to raltegravir (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 raltegravir 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?

It is not recommended to take antacids with raltegravir. You can take medicines such as omeprazole, lansoprazole or ranitidine with raltegravir, however speak to your doctor or pharmacist beforehand.

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

Most supplements can be taken with raltegravir, but always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking them. Supplements that contain iron or magnesium should not be taken with raltegravir. Calcium supplements should be taken at least 4 hours before or 4 hours after raltegravir.

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 Raltegravir!

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 notice **within 8 hours** of the time you usually take raltegravir, you must take the tablet as soon as possible. Always take the tablet with food. Then take the next dose as usual.
- If you notice **8 hours or more after** the time you usually take raltegravir, then 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. If you are having problems remembering to take your medicines speak with your clinic now and they may be able to help you.