

# Ganciclovir

*gan-SYE-kloe-vir*

**Brand Name:** Cytovene, Cytovene-IV (sodium salt),  
Vitraserit  
**Opposite Infection and Other Drugs**

**Drug Class:** Ganciclovir, also known as Cytovene or Vitraserit, belongs to the class of medicines called antivirals. Antivirals kill viruses or stop viruses from multiplying. Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a virus that usually does not cause disease in individuals with normal immune systems, but it may cause serious infections in patients with HIV or AIDS. CMV can infect various parts of the body, including the eyes, lungs, and intestines. Ganciclovir will not cure CMV infection, but it may help keep the infection under control.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Ganciclovir was approved by the FDA on June 23, 1989. The injection form of ganciclovir is approved by the FDA as both starting and continuing therapy (called maintenance treatment) of CMV infection in AIDS patients. The capsule form of ganciclovir is approved for maintenance treatment of CMV in HIV infected patients and transplant patients who are at risk for the disease. The ganciclovir intravitreal implant was approved by the FDA on March 5, 1996, for the intraocular treatment of CMV retinitis in patients with AIDS.

## Dosage Form/Administration

Ganciclovir comes in capsule, liquid, and eye implant forms. The capsule form of ganciclovir is taken by mouth with food. The liquid form is given by intravenous infusion into a vein. The implant form is inserted into the eye during surgery.

## Contraindications

Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine.

## Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, the capsule and injection forms of ganciclovir may cause some serious unwanted effects, including black, tarry stools; cough, sore throat, or hoarseness; fever or chills; pain in the lower back or side; painful urination; seeing flashes or sparks of light, floating spots, or a partial veil across vision; unusual bleeding or bruising; and unusual tiredness or weakness. The ganciclovir implant may cause a decrease in vision, blurred vision, or other change in vision; eye pain, tearing, or sensitivity of eyes to light; or red, bloodshot eyes. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may

lessen or disappear with continued use of this medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include abdominal pain, changes in behavior, diarrhea, fever, headache, increased sweating, loss of appetite, vomiting, and weight loss. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

## Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Ganciclovir, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Ganciclovir AND HIV Infections.

## Manufacturer Information

Ganciclovir  
Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

Cytovene-IV (sodium salt)  
Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

Cytovene  
Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
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# ***Ganciclovir***



## **Manufacturer Information (cont.)**

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Vitrasert  
Bausch & Lomb Surgical Inc  
555 West Arrow Highway  
Claremont, CA 91711  
(800) 531-2020

## **For More Information**

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Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help) Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET