

Ritonavir

rit-ON-uh-veer

Brand Name: Norvir

Drug Class: Protease Inhibitors

Ritonavir, also known as Norvir, is a type of medicine called a protease inhibitor (PI). PIs act by blocking protease, a protein that HIV needs to make more copies of itself.

HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Ritonavir was approved by the FDA on March 1, 1996, for use with other antiretroviral agents in the treatment of HIV infection in adults and children 2 years of age or older. Ritonavir is now approved with other anti-HIV drugs in the treatment of HIV-1 infection in children in individuals over 1 month in age. Studies have shown that ritonavir works as a booster for some other PIs. Taking ritonavir makes it possible to take a lower dose of the other PIs. This medicine does not cure or prevent HIV infection or AIDS and does not reduce the risk of passing the virus to other people.

Dosage Form/Administration

Ritonavir comes in soft gel capsule and liquid forms. Both forms are taken by mouth and should be taken with food. To improve the taste of ritonavir oral solution, patients may mix ritonavir oral solution with chocolate milk or certain vitamin- and mineral-fortified foods. Ritonavir capsules should be stored in the refrigerator; however, they can be kept at room temperature as long as they are used within 30 days. The liquid form of ritonavir should be stored at room temperature.

Recommended Daily Dose

The recommended dose of ritonavir for adults is 600 mg twice a day. Patients may start at a lower dose and increase the dose over time. The recommended dose of ritonavir for children is based on height and weight; it should not be more than 600 mg twice a day. Doses in elderly patients are currently being studied. Caution should be used when ritonavir is prescribed to elderly patients, reflecting the greater frequency in the elderly of liver, kidney, or heart problems and concurrent drug therapy for other conditions.

Some individuals may benefit from different doses of ritonavir. Individuals should always take

ritonavir as prescribed by their doctor.

Contraindications

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

Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, ritonavir can cause some unwanted effects, including severe inflammation of the pancreas. Serious side effects related to this symptom include severe stomach pain, nausea, or vomiting. Other serious side effects are changes in body fat, increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia, high sugar and fat levels in the blood, and onset or worsening of diabetes. Ritonavir may affect heart rhythm alone or when used with other drugs that affect the heart. Individuals may experience dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting spells, or abnormal heart beat and should tell a doctor if they have these or any other side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects related to this medicine include generalized weakness, burning or prickling sensation in the hands and feet, stomach pain, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, flatulence, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, change in sense of taste, headache, dizziness, drowsiness, insomnia, fever, throat irritation, abnormal thinking, rash, sore throat, and sweating. 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 (especially St. John's wort).

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Clinical Trials

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

Manufacturer Information

Ritonavir

Abbott Laboratories
One Hundred Abbott Park Rd
Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500
(800) 633-9110

Norvir

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For More Information

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 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET