

ritonavir

(generic equivalent of Norvir[®])

100 mg – white, oval tablet

What is ritonavir?

Ritonavir is a “booster” used to increase other HIV medicines to the correct level in the body. When used with other HIV medicines, ritonavir will help decrease the amount of HIV virus in your body and make your immune system stronger.

How do I take it?

- Take as directed on the prescription label:
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- Take ritonavir together with other HIV medicines at the same time(s) every day, with food
 - Swallow the tablets whole (do NOT crush or chew).

Store in a dry place at room temperature, and keep out of reach of children.

What if I forget to take it?

It is very important to take ritonavir every day to make sure that it keeps working. If you miss a dose, there is a higher chance that the virus will change to a form that is harder to treat. This is called “resistance”.

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take 2 doses at the same time. If you are not sure if you should take your dose, call the pharmacist.

If you stop taking HIV medicine, the amount of HIV virus in your blood will increase.

Do not stop ritonavir or any of your HIV medicines without talking to your doctor.

What should I expect?

The “booster” ritonavir is usually well tolerated. Side effects may include:

- nausea
- stomach pain
- tiredness
- change in sense of taste
- changes in body fat
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- headache
- tingling around mouth or in hands, feet
- changes in cholesterol or blood sugar

Rare, serious side effects may include:

- Allergic reaction: Signs include rash, blisters on skin or mouth, swelling of the face or throat, difficulty breathing, fever, flu-like symptoms
- Liver problems: Signs include yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, pale stools, or pain on right side below ribs
- Change in heart beat: Signs include dizziness, fast heart beats, fainting or seizures

Always tell your doctor or pharmacist if side effects are bothering you. IMMEDIATELY contact your doctor if you have any serious side effects

It is important to have regular blood tests to watch for side effects and make sure your HIV medicine is working to control the virus.



Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant, thinking about becoming pregnant, or if you plan to breastfeed.

Can I take ritonavir with other medicines?

Some medicines may interact with ritonavir.

Drug interactions can stop your treatment from working or may cause unwanted side effects.

Always tell your pharmacist and doctor if you are using any prescription or non-prescription medicines, vitamins, supplements, natural medicines or recreational drugs.

Medicines that may interact with ritonavir include:

- Corticosteroid inhalers ('puffers') and nasal sprays such as fluticasone (Flovent[®], Flonase[®], Advair[®]), triamcinolone (Nasacort[®]), and budesonide (Pulmicort[®], Symbicort[®]) can usually NOT be used.
- 'Puffers' for asthma with salmeterol (Serevent[®], Advair[®])
- Medicines like vardenafil (Levitra[®]), sildenafil (Viagra[®]) and tadalafil (Cialis[®])
- Some medicines to treat seizures such as phenytoin (Dilantin[®])
- Some cholesterol medicines
- Some heart medicines such as amiodarone, propafenone, and others
- Some blood thinners such as rivaroxaban (Xarelto[®]), warfarin
- Some migraine headache medicines
- Some pain medicines such as fentanyl
- Some antibiotics such as rifampin
- Some medicines to treat depression and anxiety
- Some birth control medicines
- St. John's wort

This is not a complete list of medicines that interact with ritonavir.

Always check with your pharmacist before starting any new medicines to make sure that they are safe for you.

What if I have questions?

If you have questions or problems with your medicine, call the St. Paul's Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy:

1-888-511-6222

(Monday to Friday daytime and urgent issues after hours)

To book an appointment to see a St. Paul's Hospital pharmacist, call reception:

604-806-8060

(Monday to Friday daytime)

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