

atazanavir

(generic equivalent of Reyataz®)

300 mg – red and blue capsule
200 mg – blue capsule
150 mg – dark and light blue

What is atazanavir?

Atazanavir is a medicine used to lower the amount of HIV virus in your body and make your immune system stronger. Atazanavir is always used with other HIV medicines.

How do I take it?

- Take atazanavir as directed on the prescription label:
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- Take at the same time every day
 - Always take atazanavir with food to make sure the medicine is absorbed into your body
 - Do NOT take at the same time as antacids or medicines that decrease acid in the stomach
 - Swallow the capsules whole (do NOT crush chew). The capsules may be opened and the contents sprinkled into applesauce just before taking

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 atazanavir 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 any of your HIV medicines without talking to your doctor.

What should I expect?

Atazanavir is usually well tolerated. Side effects may include:

- diarrhea
- stomach pain
- nausea
- headache
- changes in body fat
- change in cholesterol or blood sugar
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice). This is usually not harmful, but tell your doctor if this happens

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
- Kidney stones: Signs include severe pain in the side and back (below the ribs), pain or difficulty passing urine, nausea
- Gallbladder problems: Signs include severe abdominal (belly) pain, nausea
- Change in heart beat: Signs include dizziness, 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 atazanavir with other medicines?

Some medicines may interact with atazanavir. 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.

Some of the medicines that may interact with atazanavir include:

- Stomach medicines:
 - Proton pump inhibitors (PPI) such as omeprazole (Losec[®], Olex[®]), esomeprazole (Nexium[®]) or pantoprazole **should NOT** usually be used with atazanavir.
 - Antacids (Tums[®], Maalox[®], Diovol[®]) may be used, but must be taken at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after taking atazanavir
 - If you take atazanavir with a 'booster' (e.g. ritonavir): H2 blockers such as ranitidine (Zantac[®]), famotidine (Pepcid AC[®]) may be used once a day, taken at least 10 hours before or after atazanavir. Otherwise, talk to your doctor before taking these medicines.
- Corticosteroid inhalers ('puffers') and nasal sprays such as fluticasone (Flovent[®], Flonase[®], Advair[®]), triamcinolone (Nasacort[®]), and budesonide (Pulmicort[®], Symbicort[®]) can usually NOT be used with atazanavir.
- '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 atazanavir.

Always check with your pharmacist before starting any new medicines to make sure 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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