

# zidovudine

(generic equivalent of Retrovir®)

100 mg - white capsule  
Also available as liquid

## What is zidovudine?

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

## How do I take it?

- Take as directed on the prescription label:

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- Take zidovudine at the same times every day, with or without food. Taking it with food can decrease stomach upset

Store tablets and liquid 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 zidovudine 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?

Side effects may include:

- nausea
- headache
- stomach pain
- tiredness
- low appetite
- trouble sleeping
- changes in body fat
- muscle pain

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
- Low red blood cells (anemia): Signs include tiredness, shortness of breath
- Low white blood cells: Signs include increased infections
- Liver problems: Signs include yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, pale stools, or pain on right side below ribs
- A condition called lactic acidosis: Signs include unusual muscle pain, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, or a fast heartbeat or fast breathing
- Inflamed pancreas: Signs include nausea, vomiting and severe stomach pains

**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 or are thinking about becoming pregnant, or if you plan to breastfeed.



## Can I take zidovudine with other medicines?

Zidovudine can be used safely with most other medicines.

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.

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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