



plain and simple facts

DRUG INFORMATION



T-20 (enfuvirtide, Fuzeon)

Why am I given T-20 as my medication?

- T-20 (also called Fuzeon or enfuvirtide) is a new drug for the treatment of people with HIV/AIDS (PHAs).
- T-20 belongs to a new class of anti-HIV drugs called “fusion inhibitors.” It is used in combination with other drugs to treat HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection.
- T-20 binds to protein on the surface of HIV called gp41. This protein enables HIV to bind on to and enter cells. By blocking gp41, T-20 prevents HIV from entering and infecting healthy cells.
- Taking this medication can reduce the amount of virus in your body. It can also reduce your chance of getting sick from AIDS-related illnesses and help you stay healthy longer or get your health back. It may also reduce the damage to your immune system.

How do I take this medication?

- T-20 comes as a powder in a vial which needs to be mixed with sterile water into a solution for injection. It is usually supplied as a 106 mg/3.5 ml vial. After the powder is mixed with water, the solution should be used within 24 hours.
- Keep T-20 out of reach from children.
- T-20 is usually taken as 90 mg injections, 2 times daily about 12 hours apart. It should be injected under the skin (subcutaneously).
- T-20 injection should be prepared as follows:
 - ~ Make sure you have all your supplies ready. These should include: the medication T-20 in vials, sterile water solution, clean syringes and needles, alcohol swabs, and a container to dispose of your needles after the injection.
 - ~ Wash your hands and put all your supplies on a clean surface.
 - ~ Clean the tops of all vials with an alcohol swab.
 - ~ Draw up 1.1 cubic centimetre (c.c.) of sterile water using a clean syringe and needle.
 - ~ Inject the sterile water into the vial of T-20.
 - ~ Discard the needle in a safe container.
 - ~ Mix the T-20 powder with the water by rolling or tapping the vial (DO NOT SHAKE IT). It takes 2 to 5 minutes for the powder to dissolve in the water to form the solution that can be injected.
 - ~ Use a new syringe and needle to draw up 1 c.c. of the T-20 solution.

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- ~ Get rid of air bubbles in the syringe by tapping on the syringe and getting the air bubble to move to the top of the syringe, then shoot the bubble out of the needle.
- ~ Choose a place on your body for injection (do not select the same area of your last injection). Clean the skin with an alcohol swab before giving yourself the injection.
- ~ Put the used needle in a safe disposal container.

What if I forget to take a dose?

- Take the dose you missed as soon as possible. However, if it is within 2 hours of your next dose, continue with your regular schedule. Do not double the dose.
- In order for your HIV medications to work, they all need to be taken regularly and consistently. Missing or skipping doses of your medication may make it lose its effectiveness as the virus can change, or mutate, and become resistant to the medication.

What are the side effects of T-20?

- The most common side effect of T-20 is a reaction at the site of injection that can include redness, soreness, burning sensation, bruising or pain. This occurs in about 60% of T-20 users. The reaction usually improves over a couple of days but may take up to 3 weeks to completely disappear. In most cases, the reaction is mild and does not require stopping the medication. However, some people can develop lumps under the skin (nodules) or abscesses (infections).
- Other side effects of T-20 may include fever, headache, difficulty sleeping, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, racing heart beat (palpitations), fatigue and skin-colour changes.
- In rare cases, injection with T-20 has been associated with pneumonia. If you develop coughing, difficulty breathing, fever or chest pain, call your doctor right away.

Because it is a new drug, the safety of taking T-20 over the long-term is not known.

- If you are experiencing side effects from the medication, call your doctor and/or pharmacist and discuss your symptoms with them. Do not stop the medication before talking to your doctor or pharmacist; they may have suggestions of how you can manage the side effects without stopping the medication.

Can I take T-20 with other medications?

- T-20 may interact with other drugs. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and non-prescription drugs (including vitamins and herbs) that you are taking.
- Some medications are not permitted for people using T-20 during clinical trials. These include: Interleukin 2 (IL-2), Interferons, Ampligen, HIV vaccines, some other new anti-HIV drugs being studied, St. John's wort and hydroxyurea.

Can I take T-20 with alcohol or street drugs?

- In general, it is advisable to avoid excessive amounts of alcohol and street drugs while you are taking HIV medications because they may interact with some of your medications. Do not skip a dose of your medication because you want to drink or take drugs.

Can I take T-20 if I am pregnant or breast-feeding?

- The safety of using T-20 during pregnancy, breast-feeding and in children is not known at this time. Consult your doctor about taking medication if you are pregnant or thinking of having a baby.



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- HIV can be transmitted through breast milk, so breast-feeding is not recommended in HIV-positive women.

What other precautions do I need to know when taking T-20?

- Keep your appointments with your doctor to check your blood regularly.
- Make sure you have a continuous supply of the medication.
- T-20 does not kill the virus or cure AIDS. It also does not prevent the transmission of HIV, so remember to always take precautions if you are having sex (use latex condoms) or using drugs (use clean syringes and do not share needles).

Decisions about particular medical treatments should always be made in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV-related illness and the treatments in question.



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