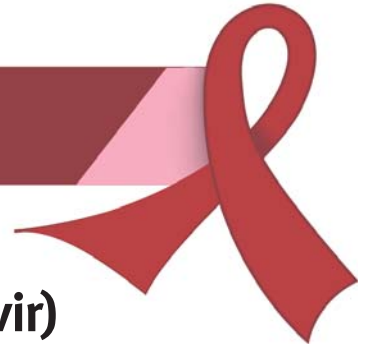




plain and simple facts

# DRUG INFORMATION



## Trizivir (Zidovudine + Lamivudine + Abacavir)

### Why am I given Trizivir as my medication?

- Trizivir is a combination of three antiretroviral drugs, abacavir (Ziagen), lamivudine (3TC, Epivir), and zidovudine (AZT or Retrovir). It may be used by itself or together with other medications to treat HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection.
- All the drugs that make up Trizivir belong to a class of drugs called Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (RTI) because they all work to block a protein called “Reverse Transcriptase”. The HIV virus needs this protein to reproduce itself, so by blocking it the drug helps slow down HIV disease.
- 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, 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?

- Each Trizivir tablet contains 300 mg of abacavir, 300 mg of AZT and 150 mg of 3TC. The usual dose is one tablet twice daily. Trizivir can be taken with or without food.
- Trizivir should be stored at room temperature in a dry place. Don't put the medicine in the bathroom or kitchen, as moisture may cause the medicine to lose its effectiveness.
- Keep it out of reach of children.

### What if I forget to take a dose?

- Take the dose you missed as soon as possible. However, if it is within two hours of your next dose, just continue with your regular schedule. Do not double the dose.
- Recent studies have found that for the anti-HIV medications to work, all the medications 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 itself and become resistant to the medication.

### What are the side effects of Trizivir?

- The side effects of Trizivir may include any or all of the side effects of the drugs it contains (i.e. abacavir, 3TC or AZT), the most common side effects include:
  - ~ headache
  - ~ stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
  - ~ fatigue
  - ~ loss of appetite

- ~ difficulty sleeping
- ~ hair loss or fingernail discoloration

If you experience these side effects, call your doctor or pharmacist to discuss your symptoms. Do not stop taking your medication or change your dose before you talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

- The most serious side effect of Trizivir is a hypersensitivity reaction that happens in about 3% of people who take it. This is due to the abacavir component of the drug and can be fatal. Symptoms can include fever and chills, muscle and joint pain, fatigue and feeling rundown, nausea and vomiting, skin rash or shortness of breath. If you have two or more of the above symptoms, *call your doctor right away*.
- Rarely, Trizivir may also cause a decrease in your white blood cells (which can increase risk for bacterial infection), and/or red blood cells (which can make you feel tired and short of breath).

### **Can I take Trizivir with other medications?**

- Trizivir can interact with other drugs. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and non-prescription medications (including vitamins and herbs) that you are taking.
- Trizivir should not be taken together with d4T (Zerit, stavudine) and ribavirin (Virazid). Other drugs that may need adjustment if taken with Trizivir include methadone, ganciclovir (Cytovene), valganciclovir (Valcyte), isoniazid, Antabuse and chloral hydrate. Consult your physician if you are taking these medications.

### **Can I take Trizivir with alcohol or street drugs?**

- Avoid alcohol if you are on Trizivir. Alcohol may increase the level of abacavir in Trizivir causing increased side effects. Trizivir may also interact with other street drugs. Consult your doctor or pharmacist if you are using street drugs so they can advise you with the necessary precautions.

### **Can I take Trizivir if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

- If you are pregnant and wish to take Trizivir, please consult your doctor about taking medication.
- Since the HIV virus can be transmitted through breast milk, breast-feeding is not recommended in HIV-positive women.

### **What other precautions do I need to know when taking Trizivir?**

- You should keep your appointments with your physician for blood tests to check your liver and kidney function regularly.
- Make sure you have a continuous supply of the medication.
- Trizivir does not kill the virus or cure AIDS. It also does not prevent the transmission of HIV, so please remember to always take precautions if you are having sex (e.g. use latex condoms) or using drugs (e.g. use clean syringes).



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**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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Funding has been provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada.