How does this medication work?

Nevirapine is an antiretroviral drug that acts by preventing multiplication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Nevirapine is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; it inhibits reverse transcriptase action when the virus enters the host cell. The virus needs reverse transcriptase to multiply in the body.

Nevirapine is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs to slow progression of the disease and reduce the risk of opportunistic infections (AIDS-related infections).

Nevirapine does not cure AIDS nor kill the virus. There is a permanent risk of transmitting HIV either through sexual or blood contact. It is therefore essential that precautions always be taken (latex condoms, clean syringes, etc.).

Fertile women must use an effective means of birth control.

How do I take this medication?

Your dosage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nevirapine</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● From __________ to ______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One 200-mg tablet, once a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Starting __________ and subsequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ 200-mg tablet(s), _____ times a day</td>
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Nevirapine may be taken with or without food.

To minimize the risk of skin rash, your doctor will prescribe nevirapine 200 mg once a day for the first 14 days. If a rash occurs during this period, you must wait until the lesions have disappeared before increasing the dose.

Your doctor will then increase the dose to 400 mg per day (see your dosage above).

It is important to take your antiretroviral medicine properly - i.e. never forget a dose, follow the instructions on how to take the medicine, and always keep on with your treatment.

It is important to take nevirapine regularly, at the same time each day, and to keep to this schedule as closely as possible. Adherence to therapy will help prevent resistance (HIV’s ability to recognize and defeat the effect of the medication) and avoid treatment failure (loss of efficacy of the antiretroviral treatment), which would result in an increased viral load and a lower number of CD4 cells, which are the ones that help your body fight infection.

Nearly everyone tends to relax their compliance with the treatment at some point. The key to success is motivation. Consult members of your care team so that they can explain the benefits of the treatment you are having. They can also suggest ways that will help you maintain it properly.

Never stop your treatment without first speaking to your doctor.

What if I forget to take a dose?

Take the dose you missed as soon as possible, and then continue with your regular schedule.

If it is nearly time for your next dose, however, just take that one at the usual time. Do not double up doses.
What are the side effects of this medication?

The main side effect of nevirapine is a rash, which generally appears in the first four to six weeks of therapy. Sometimes the rash is mild, in which case your doctor can treat it with an antihistamine (Benadryl®, Atarax®, etc.) or an anti-inflammatory agent (cream). In other cases, however, treatment must be stopped.

If the rash presents itself in the first 14 days of treatment, wait until it clears up before increasing the administration of nevirapine to twice daily.

Rarely, nevirapine can be associated with a hypersensitivity reaction presenting as a rash with an increase in liver function tests. This side effect is mostly seen in women with a CD4 greater than 250 cells/mm$^3$ and in men with a CD4 greater than 400 cells/mm$^3$. It is not recommended to start nevirapine in these individuals.

If the reaction is strong (i.e., you have one or more of the following symptoms: fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, swelling, blisters, mouth ulcers, bloodshot eyes, severe tiredness, muscle and joint aches), your doctor will stop nevirapine.

If you get a rash, contact your doctor immediately.

Other side effects such as headache, drowsiness, fatigue or an increase in liver enzymes may also occur.

In very rare cases, hepatitis occurs, manifested by the following symptoms: fatigue, abnormal weakness, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. By taking regular blood tests, your doctor will monitor the effect of nevirapine on your liver. Contact your doctor if you have these symptoms.

Inform your doctor or pharmacist of any troublesome side effects.

Can I take nevirapine with my other medications?

- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")
  Nevirapine can reduce the efficacy of oral contraceptives. Additional protective measures, such as latex condoms, are recommended.

Nevirapine can lessen the efficacy of a number of drugs.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new prescription or non-prescription medication, natural product or recreational drug.

Can I drink alcohol if I’m on nevirapine?

Avoid excessive or regular consumption of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits), as this may increase the risk of hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) or interact with some of your medications.

However, do not miss a dose of your medication because you want to have an alcoholic drink. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, reasonable (social) consumption should not damage your health.

What if I’m pregnant or breast-feeding?

The effect of nevirapine in pregnant women is not yet known. Talk to your doctor if you want to take nevirapine and are pregnant or want to become pregnant.

Since the virus can be transmitted through maternal milk, breast-feeding is not recommended in HIV-positive women.
Storage

Keep nevirapine in a dry place at room temperature (15-30°C or 59-86°F). Avoid humidity (bathrooms, etc.).

Keep out of sight and reach of children.

General Advice

Always keep your appointments with your doctor and the care team, so that your health can be closely monitored.

If you have any questions about your medications or need help to schedule when to take them, please contact your doctor or pharmacist, who is familiar with what you are taking.

Contact person: _______________________

Telephone: _________________________