How does this medication work?

Acyclovir is an antiviral drug used for the treatment and prevention of symptoms of Herpes simplex infection. It is also used to treat symptoms of chicken pox and shingles.

Acyclovir does not eliminate the herpes virus, but it relieves pain and speeds healing.

Herpes simplex is transmitted sexually. Acyclovir does not prevent you from transmitting it to others. Always take the necessary precautions. If you have genital herpes lesions, it is important to avoid sexual contact (genital or oral) and to use a latex condom carefully.

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 according to the normal schedule. Do not double up doses.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Acyclovir is generally well tolerated.

Some people may experience gastrointestinal (digestive) effects such as diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. To help lessen these, take acyclovir with food. If they occur and persist, consult your pharmacist, doctor or dietician for ways to manage these side effects.

Other side effects such as headache, dizziness, tiredness may occur. Find out how acyclovir affects you before driving a vehicle or undertaking any activity that requires close attention.

An allergic reaction may occur on rare occasions. If you notice the appearance of a skin eruption (rash, redness with or without itching) or other effect on your skin, have difficulty in breathing, inform your doctor immediately.

Tell your doctor if you have previously had an allergic reaction or other serious side effect with any of the following agents: famciclovir (Famvir®), valacyclovir (Valtrex®) or ganciclovir (Cytoven®).
Can I take acyclovir with my other medications?

There is little interaction between acyclovir and other medications.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medication, whether on prescription or not, any natural products or recreational drugs.

Can I drink alcohol if I’m on acyclovir?

Avoid the excessive or regular consumption of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits) as these may interact with some of your medications.

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

What if I’m pregnant or breast-feeding?

Acyclovir is not generally administered to pregnant women. However, in some situations this may become necessary. If you are, or want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor about taking it.

As the virus can be transmitted via maternal milk, breast-feeding is not recommended in women who are HIV-positive.

Storage

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

Place out of the sight and reach of children.

General advice

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

If you have any questions about your medications or need help on how to schedule when to take them, please contact your doctor or pharmacist, who know your medication well.

Contact person: ______________________
Telephone: ______________________