

# LAMIVUDINE/ZIDOVUDINE

Combivir®

Tablets 150 mg lamivudine / 300 mg zidovudine

## ● How does this medication work?

Combivir® is an association of 2 antiretroviral agents: lamivudine (3TC) and zidovudine (AZT), which inhibit replication of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

They belong to a group of medicines called nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, which act by inhibiting an enzyme called reverse transcriptase. The virus needs this enzyme to replicate in the body.

Combivir®, alone or in association with other antiretrovirals, is a bitherapy that is used as soon as you've been exposed to HIV to prevent the virus from spreading through your system, and therefore fight infection.

## ● How should I take this medication?

Take 1 tablet of Combivir® twice daily, every 12 hours. Combivir® can be taken with or without food. It is important to take Combivir® regularly, at the same time every day, and to follow your schedule of administration as precisely as possible.

Never stop taking your medication without first talking to your doctor.

## ● I missed a dose!

Take the missed dose as soon as possible and take the next dose at the usual time.

However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time.

**Do not double up next dose.**

## ● What are the adverse effects of this medication?

At the beginning of your treatment, you may feel some adverse effects like nausea, headaches, muscle pains, insomnia and fatigue. These effects tend to diminish with time. Headaches and muscle pains can be relieved with acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) or an anti-inflammatory (i.e. Motrin, Advil, etc.).

Gastrointestinal problems (digestive problems) like nausea/vomiting, abdominal pains and diarrhea can also occur. In order to lessen these adverse effects, you can take Combivir® with food. If these effects appear and persist, talk to your pharmacist, doctor, nurse or dietician in order to find solutions to better cope with them.

Combivir® can have an impact on your blood and can cause, for example, anemia or a reduced white blood cell count, which are necessary to fight infection.

Anemia is a reduced red blood cell count; it can manifest itself through shortness of breath, fatigue or unusual weakness, loss of appetite and pale skin. Inform your doctor if you experience these.

Talk to your doctor and pharmacist if any one of these adverse effects causes discomfort. With frequent blood tests, your doctor will monitor the effect the medication has on your system.

## ● Pregnancy and breastfeeding

If you are pregnant, trying to become pregnant or breastfeeding, tell your doctor before taking Combivir®.

## ● Can I take Combivir® with other medication?

Some medication taken with Combivir® can increase the risk of adverse effects on your blood components. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking new prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, natural health products or even recreational drugs.

## ● Can I drink alcohol with Combivir®?

Avoid excessive or regular alcohol consumption (beer, wine and spirits), which can increase the risk of hepatitis (liver inflammation) or interact with some of your medication.

However, avoid "skipping" a dose because you wish to drink alcohol. Unless instructed by your doctor, a reasonable alcohol consumption (2 glasses a day) or an occasional consumption shouldn't interfere with your treatment.

## ● To avoid the transmission of the infection in the 6 months following exposure to the virus:

- Avoid all sexual contact or use condoms;
- Avoid getting pregnant, do not breastfeed, do not donate blood, plasma, organs, tissue or sperm.

At all times: never share toothbrushes, razors, or syringes.

## ● Storage

Store Combivir® in a dry place, at room temperature (15°-30°C or 59°- 86°F); store away from humidity and bathrooms. Keep out of sight and out of the reach of children.

## ● General advice

Keep up with your appointments with your doctor and your health care team so they can keep a close check on your health.