

Aciclovir

Aciclovir 400mg dispersible tablets When used in genital herpes

Aciclovir (A-sike-loh-veer) is a medicine which is used in certain viral infections, genital herpes and shingles.

Your medicine

Aciclovir is used to treat certain types of viral infections such as cold sores or chickenpox.

Aciclovir can help to stop infections from getting worse and can also help to reduce the chances of an infection returning. It is sometimes used to prevent infections in people who are at greater risk of getting infections because their immune systems are not working properly.

Other information about Aciclovir:

- if you are taking Aciclovir to treat an infection it is best to start using it as soon as possible after the symptoms appear
- you should drink plenty of water while taking Aciclovir

Do not share your medicine with other people. It may not be suitable for them and may harm them.

The pharmacy label on your medicine tells you how much medicine you should take. It also tells you how often you should take your medicine. This is the dose that you and your prescriber have agreed you should take. You should not change the dose of your medicine unless you are told to do so by your prescriber.

If you feel that the medicine is making you unwell or you do not think it is working, then talk to your prescriber.

When to take your medicine

Some medicines work best if they are taken at a specific time of day. Getting the most benefit from your medicine can also be affected by what you eat, when you eat and the times at which you take other medicines.

Specific information on when to take Aciclovir can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet that comes with this medicine or on the medicine label. You can also ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about when to take your medicine.

How to take your medicine

Some medicines have specific instructions about how to take them. This is because they work better when taken correctly. These instructions can include getting the right dose and special instructions for preparing the medicine.

Specific information on how to take Aciclovir can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet that comes with this medicine or on the medicine label.

Alternatively, you can request information about how to take your medicine from your doctor or pharmacist.

If you are having problems taking this form of Aciclovir, you should talk to your prescriber or pharmacist. They may be able to give you advice on other ways to take your medicine or other preparations that are easier for you to take.

Taking too much of your medicine

Taking extra doses of some medicines can be harmful. In some cases even one extra dose can cause you problems. If you take extra doses of your medicine, you must get medical advice immediately. You may need a test to assess the effect of taking extra doses. This is because the effects of taking too much medicine are very complex so it is very important that you seek medical advice.

Contact your prescriber, pharmacist, specialist clinic or call 111 for advice.

Make sure you take all of your medicine containers with you if you are advised to go to hospital.

Stopping your medicine

Suddenly stopping your medicine may cause your original condition to return. This is why you must speak to your prescriber if you are having any problems taking your medicine.

If you are not having any problems taking this medicine then do not stop taking it, even if you feel better, unless advised to do so by your prescriber.

If you are in any doubt, contact your prescriber, pharmacist, specialist clinic or call 111.

Looking after your medicine

The instructions on how you should keep your medicine are on the pharmacy label. It is a good idea to keep your medicine in the original container. This will help to keep your medicine in the best condition and also allow you to check the instructions. Do not take the medicine if the packaging appears to have been tampered with or if the medicine shows any signs of damage. Make sure that the medicine is out of the sight and reach of children.

Specific information on how to look after Aciclovir can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet that comes with this medicine or on the medicine label. Alternatively, you can request information about how to look after your medicine from your doctor or pharmacist.

You must not take the medicine after the expiry date shown on the packaging. If you have any unused

medicine, return it to your pharmacist who will dispose of it safely.

Whether this medicine is suitable for you

Aciclovir is not suitable for everyone and some people should never use it. Other people should only use it with special care. It is important that the person prescribing this medicine knows your full medical history.

Your prescriber may only prescribe this medicine with special care or may not prescribe it at all if you:

- are allergic or sensitive to or have had a reaction to any of the ingredients in the medicine
- are dehydrated
- are elderly
- are allergic or sensitive to or have had a bad reaction to valaciclovir in the past
- are immunocompromised
- have neurological problems
- have kidney problems or have risk factors for developing kidney problems

As part of the process of assessing suitability to take this medicine a prescriber may also arrange tests:

- to check that this medicine is not having any undesired effects

Over time it is possible that Aciclovir can become unsuitable for some people, or they may become unsuitable for it. If at any time it appears that Aciclovir has become unsuitable, it is important that the prescriber is contacted immediately.

Side-effects

A medicine is only made available to the public if the clinical trials have shown that the benefits of taking the medicine outweigh the risks.

Once a medicine has been licensed, information on the medicine's effects, both intended and unintended, is continuously recorded and updated.

Some side-effects may be serious while others may only be a mild inconvenience.

Everyone's reaction to a medicine is different. It is difficult to predict which side-effects you will have from taking a particular medicine, or whether you will have any side-effects at all. The important thing is to tell your prescriber or pharmacist if you are having problems with your medicine.

Common: More than 1 in 100 people who take Aciclovir

- diarrhoea
- feeling dizzy

- fever
- headaches
- itching
- nausea
- photosensitivity skin reaction
- skin rash or rashes
- stomach pain
- tiredness
- vomiting

Uncommon: More than 1 in 1000 people who take Aciclovir

- hair loss
- urticaria

Rare: More than 1 in 10,000 people who take Aciclovir

- abnormal laboratory test results
- anaphylactic reactions
- angioedema
- breathing difficulties
- erythema multiforme
- kidney problems - to help prevent this from happening you should drink plenty of fluids while taking Aciclovir
- neurological problems such as drowsiness, confusion, hallucinations, sleepiness, convulsions, coma, general feeling of being unwell, feeling agitated, balance or coordination problems, speech problems, psychiatric problems, brain or central nervous system problems or tremors – seek medical advice if you experience any of the neurological problems
- Stevens-Johnson syndrome
- toxic epidermal necrolysis

Very rare: Fewer than 1 in 10,000 people who take Aciclovir

- blood problems
- jaundice
- liver problems

The frequency of these side-effects is unknown

- antibiotic resistance to Aciclovir - this may occur if Aciclovir is taken at a high dose

If you feel unwell or if you have concerns about a side-effect, you will need to seek advice. If you feel very ill, get medical help straight away. Contact your prescriber, pharmacist, nurse or call 111.

Taking other medicines

If you are taking more than one medicine they may interact with each other. At times your prescriber may decide to use medicines that interact, in other cases this may not be appropriate.

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The decision to use medicines that interact depends on your specific circumstances. Your prescriber may decide to use medicines that interact, if it is believed that the benefits of taking the medicines together outweigh the risks. In such cases, it may be necessary to alter your dose or monitor you more closely.

Tell your prescriber the names of all the medicines that you are taking so that they can consider all possible interactions. This includes all the medicines which have been prescribed by your GP, hospital doctor, dentist, nurse, health visitor, midwife or pharmacist. You must also tell your prescriber about medicines which you have bought over the counter without prescriptions.

The following medicines may interact with Aciclovir:

- probenecid
- cimetidine
- mycophenolate mofetil
- ciclosporin
- zidovudine
- theophylline

The following types of medicine may interact with Aciclovir:

- immunosuppressant medicines

If you are taking Aciclovir and one of the above medicines or types of medicines, make sure your prescriber knows about it.

Complementary preparations and vitamins

Medicines can interact with complementary preparations and vitamins. In general, there is not much information available about interactions between medicines and complementary preparations or vitamins.

If you are planning to take or are already taking any complementary preparations and vitamins you should ask your prescriber whether there are any known interactions with Aciclovir.

Your prescriber can advise whether it is appropriate for you to take combinations that are known to interact. They can also discuss with you the possible effect that the complementary preparations and vitamins may have on your condition.

If you experience any unusual effects while taking this medicine in combination with complementary preparations and vitamins, you should tell your prescriber.

Driving and operating machinery

When taking any medicine you should be aware that it might interfere with your ability to drive or operate machinery safely.

In the case of Aciclovir:

- this medicine could affect your ability to drive or operate machinery

You should see how this medicine affects you before you judge whether you are safe to drive or operate machinery. If you are in any doubt about whether you should drive or operate machinery, talk to your prescriber.

Diet

Medicines can interact with certain foods. In some cases, this may be harmful and your prescriber may advise you to avoid certain foods.

In the case of Aciclovir:

- there are no specific foods that you must exclude from your diet when taking Aciclovir

Alcohol

Alcohol can interact with certain medicines.

In the case of Aciclovir:

- there are no known interactions between alcohol and Aciclovir

Family planning and pregnancy

Most medicines, in some way, can affect the development of a baby in the womb. The effect on the baby differs between medicines and also depends on the stage of pregnancy that you have reached when you take the medicine.

In the case of Aciclovir:

- you should only take this medicine during pregnancy if your doctor thinks that you need it

You need to discuss your specific circumstances with your doctor to weigh up the overall risks and benefits of taking this medicine. You and your doctor can make a decision about whether you are going to take this medicine during pregnancy.

If the decision is that you should not have Aciclovir, then you should discuss whether there is an alternative medicine that you could take during pregnancy.

Breast-feeding

Certain medicines can pass into breast milk and may reach your baby through breast-feeding.

In the case of Aciclovir:

- you should only take this medicine while breast-feeding if your doctor thinks you need it

Before you have your baby you should discuss breast-feeding with your doctor or midwife. They will help you decide what is best for you and your baby based on the benefits and risks associated with this medicine. You should only breast-feed your baby while taking this medicine on the advice of your doctor or midwife.

Ingredients of your medicine

Medicines contain active ingredients. They may also contain other, additional ingredients that help ensure the stability, safety and effectiveness of the medicine. They are also added to improve the medicine's taste and appearance and to make it easier to take. Some may be used to prolong the life of the medicine.

This medicine contains aciclovir.

We are unable to list all of the ingredients for your medicine here. For a full list, you should refer to the patient information leaflet that comes with this medicine. You should check that you are able to take the ingredients of your medicine, especially if you have any allergies. You should also check whether any of these ingredients are known to have side-effects.

If you are not able to take any of the ingredients in your medicine, talk to your prescriber or pharmacist to see if they can suggest an alternative medicine. If you have reacted badly to Aciclovir before, do not take Aciclovir. Talk to your prescriber, pharmacist or nurse as soon as possible.