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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Emtricitabine and Tenofovir Alafenamide

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Descovy

## Brand Names: Canada

Descovy

## Warning

### For all patients taking this drug:

- Hepatitis B has gotten worse when this drug was stopped in some people with hepatitis B. Close follow-up for a few months is needed when therapy is stopped in people who have hepatitis B. Do not stop taking this drug without calling your doctor.
- This drug is not approved to treat hepatitis B. Hepatitis B testing needs to be done before taking this drug.

### For HIV negative patients taking this drug to lower the chance of getting HIV through sex:

- You must have a negative HIV test before taking this drug and at least every 3 months while you take it. Tell your doctor if you think you have been exposed to HIV. Call your doctor right away if you have a fever, headache, feel tired, joint or muscle aches, throwing up, diarrhea, sore throat, rash, night sweats, or swollen glands. Call your doctor right away if you had any of these signs within 1 month before you start taking this drug.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat HIV infection.
- It is used in HIV negative patients to lower the chance of getting HIV infection through sex.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

### For all patients taking this drug:

- If you have an allergy to emtricitabine, tenofovir, or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have kidney disease.
- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Carbamazepine, oxcarbazepine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, rifabutin, rifampin, rifapentine, St. John's wort, or tipranavir plus ritonavir.
- If you are taking any drugs that can raise the chance of kidney problems. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

### For HIV negative patients taking this drug to lower the chance of getting HIV through sex:

- If you have not been tested for HIV.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking

with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your urine checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Kidney problems like kidney failure have happened with this drug. Tell your doctor if you have ever had kidney problems.
- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through blood or having sex. Do not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom. Do not share needles or other things like toothbrushes or razors.
- Rarely, this drug may cause a swollen liver and a buildup of acid in the blood. Sometimes, this may be deadly. The risk may be higher in women, in overweight people, and in people who have taken drugs like this one for a long time.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

### **For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:**

- This drug is not a cure for HIV. Stay under the care of your doctor.

### **For HIV negative patients taking this drug to lower the chance of getting HIV through sex:**

- This drug does not always prevent HIV. It needs to be used as part of a program that has other measures to help prevent HIV. This includes safer sex habits, testing for diseases passed by having sex, and talking with sex partners who have HIV about their HIV treatment. Talk with the doctor for

more information.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of too much lactic acid in the blood (lactic acidosis) like fast breathing, fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, very bad upset stomach or throwing up, feeling very sleepy, shortness of breath, feeling very tired or weak, very bad dizziness, feeling cold, or muscle pain or cramps.

### **For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:**

- Changes in your immune system can happen when you start taking drugs to treat HIV. If you have an infection that you did not know you had, it may show up when you take this drug. Tell your doctor right away if you have any new signs after you start this drug, even after taking it for several months. This includes signs of infection like fever, sore throat, weakness, cough, or shortness of breath.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these

side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

### **For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:**

- Upset stomach.

### **For HIV negative patients taking this drug to lower the chance of getting HIV through sex:**

- Diarrhea.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

## **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take with or without food.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- It is important that you do not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.

## **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you are not sure what to do if you miss a dose, call your doctor.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store in the original container at room temperature.

- Keep lid tightly closed.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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