



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Lamivudine and Zidovudine

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

Combivir

Brand Names: Canada

Combivir

Warning

- Low white and red blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If white blood cell counts get low, the chance of getting an infection may be raised. If red blood cell counts get low, this can lead to anemia and a blood transfusion. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause muscle aches and stiffness if it is used for long periods of time. Closely read the part in this leaflet that lists when to call the doctor.
- This drug may rarely cause swollen liver and an acid health problem in the blood. This may be deadly in some cases. The chance may be higher in women, in overweight people, and

in people who have taken drugs like this one for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.

- 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 giving this drug to your child without calling your child's doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat HIV infection.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child weighs less than 66 pounds (30 kilograms).
- If your child has any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Doxorubicin, ribavirin, or stavudine.
- If your child is taking a drug that has sorbitol in it.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug.

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child's blood work checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.
- This drug is not a cure for HIV. Be sure your child stays under the care of the doctor.
- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through blood. Be sure needles and other things like toothbrushes or razors are not shared. Talk with the doctor.

- Loss of body fat in the legs, arms, buttocks, and face can happen with this drug. This may not go back to normal. It is not known how this loss of body fat may affect health over a long time. Your child will need to be checked for any changes in body fat while taking this drug. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- A pancreas problem (pancreatitis) has happened in children taking lamivudine with or without other HIV drugs. Sometimes this has been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If your child has hepatitis C and HIV, talk with your child's doctor. Liver function has gotten worse in people who were taking this drug and interferon alfa with or without ribavirin. Sometimes, this has been deadly.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through having sex. Be sure your child does not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom. Talk with the doctor.

If your child is pregnant:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- 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 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.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Low mood (depression).
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Muscle pain or weakness.

- Change in body fat.
- Changes in your child's immune system can happen when your child starts taking drugs to treat HIV. If your child has an infection that you did not know was there, it may show up when your child takes this drug. Tell your child's doctor right away if your child has any new signs after starting 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Runny nose.
- Stuffy nose.
- Not hungry.
- Dizziness.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Stomach cramps.

- Joint pain.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.
- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.
- If your child has trouble swallowing, talk with the doctor.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

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

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

- Store at room temperature.
- 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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 to search our virtual library.

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