



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Telbivudine

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.

## Warning

- Hepatitis B has gotten worse when this drug was stopped. Close follow-up for several months is needed if treatment is stopped. Do not stop taking this drug without talking with your doctor.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat hepatitis B infection.

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

- If you have an allergy to telbivudine 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 are taking peginterferon alfa-2a.

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?**

### **All products:**

- 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.
- This drug is not a cure for hepatitis infection. Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well. Be sure to stay under the care of your doctor and have regular appointments.
- This drug does not stop the spread of hepatitis to others through blood, body fluids, or having sex. Do not have any kind of sex without using a condom. Do not share injection equipment like needles. Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them like toothbrushes or razors. Talk with your doctor or other health care provider about safe sex and other ways to prevent spreading hepatitis to others.
- 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 females, in overweight people, and in people who have taken drugs like this one for a long time.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any

risks to your baby.

## **Liquid (solution):**

- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.

## **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:

- 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, tiredness, decreased appetite, 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.
- Not able to pass urine or change in how much urine is passed.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Change in balance.
- Trouble walking.
- Fever.

- Swelling of belly.
- A certain muscle problem (rhabdomyolysis) has happened with this drug. Rarely, this has led to organ problems and death. Call your doctor right away if you have muscle pain or weakness.

## **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:

- Belly pain.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Cough.
- Diarrhea.
- Upset stomach.
- Back pain.
- Dizziness.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Joint pain.
- Sore throat.

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.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

## How is this drug best taken?

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

### All products:

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

### Tablets:

- If you have trouble swallowing, talk with your doctor.

### Liquid (solution):

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug.
- If you pour too much of this drug into the measuring device, pour the extra drug in the sink. Do not pour it back into the bottle.

## 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?

## All products:

- 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.

## Liquid (solution):

- Do not freeze.
- Throw away any unused portion 2 months after opening.

## 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. 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 generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, 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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