PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Raltegravir

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Isentress; Isentress HD

Brand Names: Canada

Isentress; Isentress HD

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 is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has liver disease.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs:

Carbamazepine, etravirine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, rifampin, or tipranavir/ritonavir.

- If your child is taking an antacid.
- If your child is pregnant, may become pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. Before giving this drug to your child, you will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby. You will also need to talk about the best way for your child to prevent passing HIV to the baby.

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 to give this drug with all of your child's other 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 and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug is not a cure for HIV. Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by the doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well. Be sure your child stays under the care of the doctor and has regular appointments.
- This drug helps to lower how much HIV is in the blood. Lowering the amount of HIV in the blood until it is not detected on blood tests can help lower the risk of spreading HIV to others. There are also other ways to help prevent the spread of HIV to others. This includes using condoms during sex and not sharing needles and other injection equipment. Talk with your child's doctor or other health care provider about the best way to prevent spreading HIV to others.
- If your child has phenylketonuria (PKU), talk with your child's doctor. Some products have phenylalanine.
- Not all products are meant for use in all children. Talk with the doctor before giving this drug to a child.
- If giving this drug to your child and your child's weight changes, talk with the doctor. The dose of this drug may need to be changed.

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, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Muscle weakness.
- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS), toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN), and other serious reactions. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if your child has signs like red, swollen, blistered, or

peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in the mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever; chills; body aches; shortness of breath; or swollen glands.

- 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.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.

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.

All products:

- Give this drug with or without food.
- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.
- Do not run out of this drug.
- If your child is on dialysis, talk with the doctor.

Tablets:

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.

Chewable tablets:

- This drug may be chewed or swallowed whole.
- If needed, the 25 mg tablets may be mixed with liquid

like water, juice, or breast milk. Add tablets to a cup and add 5 mL of liquid for each tablet. The tablets will fall apart within 2 minutes. Crush any pieces left with a spoon before you give your child the dose. If any of the drug is left in the cup, add 5 mL of liquid, swirl, and have your child drink.

- After mixing, give your child's dose right away. Do not store for future use.

Powder for suspension:

- Do not open until you are ready to use.
- Mix contents of the packet and 10 mL of water in the mixing cup. Gently swirl for 45 seconds; do not shake. Once mixed, measure the dose. This drug is to be taken within 30 minutes of mixing. Throw away any part not used after mixing.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug.

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 your child misses a dose, call the doctor.

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

- Store in the original container 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.

Tablets and chewable tablets:

- The bottle has a desiccant in it to keep the drug dry. Keep the desiccant in the bottle. Do not let your child eat or swallow the desiccant.

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.

- 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 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 https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

Last Reviewed Date

2024-03-01

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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 to search our virtual library.

Raltegravir - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center