MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cabotegravir

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

Apretude; Vocabria

Brand Names: Canada

Vocabria

Warning

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

- Your child must have a negative HIV test before taking this drug and before every injection. Tell the doctor if you think your child has been exposed to HIV. Call the doctor right away if your child has flu-like signs, fever, headache, tiredness, joint or muscle aches, throwing up, diarrhea, sore throat, rash, night sweats, or swollen glands. Call the doctor right away if your child had any of these signs within 1 month before starting 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.
- When used to treat HIV infection, this drug must be taken with another drug called rilpivirine. Be sure you know about the warnings, benefits, and risks of rilpivirine.

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

For all patients taking 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 is taking any of these drugs: Carbamazepine, oxcarbazepine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, rifabutin, rifampin, or rifapentine.
- If the patient weighs less than 77 pounds (35 kilograms) or the patient is a child younger than 12 years of age.
- 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.

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

- If your child has not been tested for HIV.

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?

For all patients taking 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.
- If your child has had hepatitis, talk with the doctor.

For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:

- 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.

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 like using condoms, 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.
- 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.

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:

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 depression, suicidal thoughts, emotional ups and downs, abnormal thinking, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- 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.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Eye irritation.

For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:

- 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:

For all patients taking this drug:

- Headache.
- Upset stomach.
- Trouble sleeping.

- Strange or odd dreams.

For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:

- Anxiety.

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

- Stomach pain or diarrhea.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Signs of a common cold.
- **Injection:** Irritation where the injection was given.
- Gas.
- Throwing up.
- Decreased appetite.
- Back 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.

For patients taking this drug to treat HIV infection:

- Give this drug at the same time as rilpivirine with a meal.
- Do not use a protein drink in place of a meal.
- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.
- If your child takes products that have iron, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, or zinc in them (like some antacids or vitamins), you may need to give them to your child at some other time than this drug. Talk with your child’s doctor or pharmacist.

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

- It is important that your child does not miss or skip a dose of this drug during treatment.
- **Tablets:** Give this drug with or without food.
- If your child takes products that have iron, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, or zinc in them (like some antacids or vitamins), you may need to give them to

your child at some other time than this drug. Talk with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

- **Injection:** It is given as a shot into a muscle.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Tablets:

- 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.

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.
- If your child needs to miss a planned appointment, talk with the doctor about treatment options.

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

Tablets:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Protect from heat.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child’s doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- 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.
- 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.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., 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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