

How to take your



COMBIVIR

(Also called AZT plus 3TC)

Nucleoside Analog Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NRTI)

What is Combivir? (KOM-bih-veer)

Combivir is a strong medicine that can reduce the amount of HIV in your body. Combivir mixes two anti-HIV medicines (AZT and 3TC) in one pill to make the medicines easier to take. Combivir fights HIV best when you take it together with one or more other anti-HIV medicines.

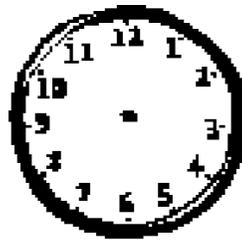
How many pills do I take? And when do I take them?

Each day, take _____ pills every _____ hours.

Take your pills at these times EVERY DAY:



Morning



Evening

Important: To be sure there is always enough Combivir in your body to fight HIV, take your pills as close to these times as possible.

Special Instructions for taking Combivir:

- It's your choice: You can take Combivir while you eat a meal or snack, OR you can take it without food.
- If you feel sick to your stomach, it may help to take Combivir while you eat a meal or snack.

What if I forget to take my pills on time?

- When you notice that you missed a dose, take your pill right away.

Then, for your NEXT DOSE:

- **If your next planned pill-taking time is four or more hours away,** take your next dose at the planned time.



- **If your next planned pill-taking time is less than four hours away,** DO NOT take your next dose at the planned time. Instead, wait four hours and then take your next dose.

If you forget more than two doses in a week, call your doctor or nurse to talk about what to do.

What should I do if I have side effects?

Some people who take Combivir have side effects (unwanted effects of the medicine).

Possible side effects include:

- headaches
- feeling sick to your stomach
- feeling tired



If you have these or other side effects:

- Keep in mind that most side effects go away in a few days or weeks.
- Call your doctor or nurse. They may have ways to relieve your side effects.
- DO NOT take fewer pills or stop taking your pills. Talk to your doctor first.
- Try the ideas in the tip sheet, “Coping with Side Effects”.

Important: Some side effects of Combivir (such as blood problems) can only be discovered by lab tests done by a doctor or nurse. So be sure to go to all your doctor’s visits.



What are the medicines I should NOT use now that I’m taking Combivir?

Some medicines don’t mix well with Combivir. Taking Combivir when you are using these medicines could make you very sick or cause the medicines not to work.



Your doctor knows which medicines are safe to take with Combivir and which are not. **Be sure you have told your doctor ALL the medicines you are taking.** This includes:

- medicines prescribed to you by a doctor
- medicines you can buy without a prescription
- herbal medicines
- street drugs

Call your doctor or nurse if:



- you have questions about how to take Combivir
- you are being bothered by side effects
- you feel like stopping or taking less Combivir
- you are having trouble taking Combivir on time
- you want to start taking ANY medicine you are not now taking.

DON'T FORGET: You can still spread the virus.

The anti-HIV medicines you are taking can help you stay healthier longer. But they do not cure HIV. To avoid passing HIV to others:
Practice safe sex. Don't share needles or syringes.

Developed by John Snow, Inc. and JSI Clinical Research. Boston, MA, 1998; updated in 2001.

This document may be reproduced for educational purposes, provided it is used in its entirety and appropriate credit is given.

