



Your Guide to Taking Epzicom

Clinic·Hospital

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Introduction

“Your Guide to Taking Epzicom” provides information to people like you who will start taking the drug. It explains the unique characteristics of this drug, the administration method, things you should keep in mind, and other matters. If you have anything you do not understand or things that concern you about this drug or your treatment, consult your chief physician, pharmacists, nurses or other medical staff. Even if you notice changes in your physical condition or if there is anything that concerns you after started taking the drug, do not discontinue the drug or reduce the dose on your own initiative. Make sure to consult the medical staff. There is no need to worry, such as “Is it really all right to ask about such a thing?” You are welcome to ask about even the tiniest things: the medical staff is always ready to assist you.



What are Epzicom?

Product name Epzicom Combination Tablets

Generic name Abacavir Sulfate, Lamivudine
(name of the ingredients)

Components One tablet of Epzicom contains two types of drugs, abacavir and lamivudine.

Classification Epzicom is a type of drug called a reverse transcriptase inhibitor. It must be taken together with other HIV infection treatment drugs.

Outer appearance It is an orange tablet (diameter: approximately 20.3 mm), and has the inscription “GS FC2” on the surface.



(Actual size)



Actions Epzicom is a drug used for the treatment of HIV infections. It works to suppress viruses from increasing, reduce the amount of virus in the blood, and prevent immune capabilities from weakening.

Storage Avoid direct sunlight and store at room temperature (under 30 °C). Keep it out of reach of children.

How to take the drug

Take one tablet each day, together with a glass of water or lukewarm water. You may take it before meals, after meals, or on an empty stomach as long as you take it at the same time period each day.



At what time should you take it?

Please consult with your chief physician, pharmacist, nurse or other medical staff to decide at what time you will take the drug each day. HIV treatment drugs must be taken continuously every day on a regular basis. To do this, you must select the time that is the most convenient for you to suit your lifestyle patterns. Make sure to inform the medical staff about your lifestyle patterns and discuss when the best time to take the drug is, then decide. Many people follow different lifestyle patterns between weekdays and weekends. So make sure to take that into consideration also. If your lifestyle pattern changes after having started taking the drug, such as by switching jobs, etc., and if you find that it has become difficult to take the drug at the previously determined time period, consult the medical staff and change the dosing time.

Do not make judgments on your own initiative

Even if your physical condition improves, do not discontinue taking the drug or reduce the dose on your own initiative. Always consult the medical staff first. If you find it difficult to take the drug because of adverse drug reactions, make sure to consult your chief physician or pharmacist.

What if you forgot to take it?

HIV treatment drugs must be taken regularly every day. If you notice that you had forgotten to take it, take one dose immediately at that juncture. If it is close to the time of your next dosing, however, skip the dose you had forgotten to take, and take one tablet at the time of your next dosing. Never take two doses at one time. If you are unsure about what to do and are worried, consult your chief physician or pharmacist. It may give you peace of mind if you discuss with your chief physician and pharmacist before starting taking the drug about what to do in case you forget to take the drug.

Drugs or foods that should not be taken together

Meals

The effects remain unchanged regardless of when you take the drug, such as before or after meals, or on an empty stomach. There are no foods that you should be careful about taking, either. Make sure to pay attention to your physical condition and try to eat a well-balanced diet.

Other drugs

Some drugs may make you feel ill if you take them together with Epzicom. If you have a drug you take regularly, or if you want to take a drug because of a cold or other reasons, make sure to consult your chief physician or pharmacist before taking it. Always consult your chief physician or pharmacist before taking any drugs—not only drugs prescribed by a doctor, but also drugs you had bought over-the-counter at a drugstore.

Health foods and nutritional supplements

Some types may make you feel ill if you take them together with Epzicom. If you want to take them together, like with other drugs, make sure to consult your chief physician or pharmacist before taking them.



Your information that should be conveyed to the chief physician or pharmacists

If you have taken an HIV infection treatment drug named Ziagen Tablets (generic name: abacavir) in the past, make sure to tell your doctor or pharmacist about it.

- If you are pregnant or lactating, make sure to tell your doctor or pharmacist about it.
- If you have a chronic disease, make sure to tell your doctor or pharmacist about it.
- If you have a drug, health food or nutritional supplement that you always take, make sure to tell your doctor or pharmacist about it.



What about adverse drug reactions?

A drug may cause undesirable effects, called adverse drug reactions, other than the aimed effects, in some people. The way an adverse drug reaction appears differs from one person to another. If you feel some physical abnormalities, or perceive that something is different from usual, consult your chief physician or pharmacist at once.

Major adverse drug reactions of this drug may include the following:

Digestive symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, loss of appetite), eruptions, feeling of fatigue.

Symptoms other than the above may develop. If you detect any abnormalities, make sure to consult your chief physician and pharmacist.

Even if you have no subjective symptoms, abnormalities may develop in liver function tests and on cholesterol levels, so make sure to visit the hospital regularly.

Hypersensitivity (allergic symptoms)

An overseas clinical test has shown that about one out of twenty people who took this drug developed hypersensitivity or allergic symptoms. If you discontinue taking the drug after developing allergic symptoms and resume taking the drug, you may develop extremely severe allergic symptoms. If you develop symptoms that are believed to be allergy-related, make sure to consult the medical staff.

If the following symptoms appear, it might be this drug's hypersensitivity reaction.

1. Eruptions
2. If more than two symptoms out of the following four groups develop at the same time:
 - ① Fever
 - ② Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
 - ③ Drowsiness, lethargy, muscular and joint pain, headache
 - ④ Shortness of breath, sore throat, coughing

* In most cases, allergic symptoms caused by this drug develop within six weeks of starting the drug. There were, however, cases whereby allergic symptoms developed after that period.

* Make sure to have your chief physician or pharmacist provide you with detailed explanation on allergic symptoms (hypersensitivity) associated with this drug. Detailed explanation documents are also available, so ask the medical staff to give them to you.

