

# **Vaclovir**

## **for Herpes Simplex**

contains the active ingredient valaciclovir (as hydrochloride)

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### **CONSUMER MEDICINE INFORMATION**

#### **What is in this leaflet**

This leaflet answers some common questions about Vaclovir.

It does not contain all of the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have benefits and risks. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking Vaclovir against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

**If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.**

Keep this leaflet with your medicine.

You may need to read it again.

#### **What Vaclovir is used for**

Vaclovir belongs to a group of medicines called antivirals.

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Vaclovir tablets are used for the treatment of genital herpes infection. Vaclovir works by stopping the multiplication of the virus which causes herpes. They can reduce the length and severity of an outbreak of herpes, the duration of pain and shorten the time to healing of crusting associated with herpes. They do not eliminate the herpes virus from the body. The herpes virus is also known as the Herpes Simplex Virus, or HSV.

Vaclovir helps the blisters to heal more quickly. If you start taking them as soon as you feel an outbreak starting, you may actually prevent the blisters from developing.

Vaclovir can also be taken long term to help prevent the HSV infection coming back.

Vaclovir is more effective in patients 50 years of age and older.

Vaclovir can also reduce the risk of transmitting the virus that causes genital herpes in patients who are taking it continuously to prevent or reduce recurrent outbreaks. It does not cure genital herpes or completely eliminate the risk of transmission. Therefore, in addition to therapy with Vaclovir, it is recommended that patients avoid contact when symptoms are present and always use condoms.

Vaclovir (or any other antiviral) is not a cure for genital herpes. Because genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease, you should minimise having intercourse when you have an outbreak of herpes or show any symptoms. This will avoid the risk of spreading herpes to your partner.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why Vaclovir has been prescribed for you.

Vaclovir is not addictive.

## **Before you take Vaclovir**

### **When you must not take it**

**Do not take Vaclovir if you have an allergy to:**

- any medicine containing (valaciclovir, aciclovir)
- any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include

- shortness of breath
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- rash, itching or hives on the skin

**Do not take this medicine if you are pregnant.**

It may affect your developing baby if you take it during pregnancy.

**Do not breast-feed if you are taking this medicine.**

Your doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of using Vaclovir tablets when pregnant and during breastfeeding.

**Do not give this medicine to children.**

There is not enough information to recommend the use of Vaclovir in children.

**Do not take this medicine after the expiry date printed on the pack or if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.**

If you take them after the expiry date has passed, they may not work as well.

**If you are not sure whether you should be taking Vaclovir, talk to your doctor.**

**Before you start to take it**

**Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any other medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.**

**Tell your doctor if you have or have had any of the following medical conditions:**

- are anaemic (reduced blood cells or iron stores)

Care should be taken to ensure adequate fluid intake in patients who are at risk of dehydration, such as the elderly.

- you have a kidney or liver condition
- previous skin reactions with Vaclovir which may include a rash, fever, facial swelling or blistering/peeling skin

- you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Your doctor will discuss the risk and benefit of taking Vaclovir when pregnant

**If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, please do so before you take Vaclovir.**

## **Taking other medicines**

**Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including medicines you buy without a prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop. Tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following medicines:**

- mycophenolate mofetil
- ciclosporin
- tacrolimus
- aminoglycosides
- organoplatinum compounds
- iodinated contrast media
- methotrexate
- pentamidine
- foscarnet

Some medicines may affect the way others work. You may need different amounts of your medicines, or you may need to take different medicines. Some of the medicines above are

commonly taken by transplant patients and require close attention.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking this medicine.

## **How to take Vaclovir**

**Follow all directions given to you by your doctor and pharmacist carefully.**

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

**If you do not understand the instructions on the box, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.**

## **How much to take**

### **Acute (short term) treatment of genital herpes:**

If you have had a herpes infection before, you should start to take Vaclovir as early as possible if you think you are about to have another recurrence (attack). Dosing should ideally start just before, or straight after the first signs of HSV infection appear.

If you have been prescribed Vaclovir 500 mg tablets for the treatment of HSV infection, the usual dose to take is one tablet with water twice daily.

### **Suppressive (long term) treatment of genital herpes:**

If you have been prescribed Valclovir 500 mg tablets to prevent the herpes infection appearing again, the usual dose to take is 500 mg once daily. Your doctor may recommend that you take this as a divided dose (i.e. 250 mg twice daily).

If you previously have had more than 10 recurrences (attacks) in one year, your doctor may recommend that you take 1000 mg of Valclovir once daily to prevent recurrences.

If you think you have been advised to take a different dose, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## **How to take it**

Swallow the tablets with a glass of water.

You should drink plenty of fluids while taking Valclovir, especially if you are elderly.

## **When to take it**

The usual times to take the tablets for the treatment of genital herpes are in the morning and evening.

## **How long to take it**

For the treatment of herpes infections, the usual course of treatment is five days. However in some instances your doctor may want you to take your tablets for ten days.

For prevention of herpes infections, you should continue to take this medicine every day as prescribed by your doctor.

**Do not stop taking Vaclovir before the course of treatment is finished just because you feel better. The herpes outbreak may not be completely over.**

### **If you forget to take it**

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose when you are meant to. Otherwise, take it as soon as you remember, then go back to taking it as you would normally.

**Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.**

**If you miss more than one dose, or you are not sure what to do ask your doctor or pharmacist.**

**If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine ask your pharmacist for some hints.**

### **If you take too much (overdose)**

**Immediately telephone your doctor or Poisons Information Centre (telephone 131126) for advice, if you think you or anyone else may have taken too much Vaclovir, even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning. You may need urgent medical attention.**

**Keep telephone numbers for these places handy.**

**If you are not sure what to do, contact your doctor or pharmacist.**

# **While you are taking Vaclovir**

## **Things you must do**

**Tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are taking Vaclovir if you are about to be started on any new medicines.**

**Tell your doctor if you become pregnant or are trying to become pregnant or intend to breastfeed while you are taking Vaclovir.**

**Drink plenty of fluids while you are taking Vaclovir.**

**Tell your doctor if, for any reason, you have not taken your medicine exactly as prescribed.**

Otherwise, your doctor may think that it was not effective and change your treatment unnecessarily.

**Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how Vaclovir affect you.**

## **Things you must not do**

**Do not stop taking Vaclovir or change the dose without first checking with your doctor.**

**Do not give this medicine to anyone else, even if their symptoms seem similar to yours.**

**Do not use Vaclovir to treat any other conditions unless advised by your doctor.**

## **Side effects**

**Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking Vaclovir.**

This medicine helps most people with genital herpes but it may have unwanted side effects in some people.

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical attention if you get some of the side effects.

**Do not be alarmed by the following list of side effects.**

You may not experience any of them.

**Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.**

The most commonly reported side effects are:

- headache
- gastrointestinal discomfort (vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea, constipation, abdominal pain, indigestion)

**These should be reported to the doctor or pharmacist if they are severe or become troublesome.**

**Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice any of the following and they worry you:**

- dry mouth
- fever
- difficulty sleeping
- chills
- back pain
- nervousness
- skin rash which may be itchy
- weakness

Some people are allergic to medicines. Symptoms of an allergic reaction may be mild or severe.

They usually include some or all of the following:

- wheezing
- swelling of the lips/mouth
- difficulty in breathing
- hay fever
- lumpy rash ("hives")
- fainting

**If you think you are having an allergic reaction to Vaclovir, stop taking the tablets and tell your doctor**

**immediately or go to the casualty department at your nearest hospital.**

This is not a complete list of all possible side effects. Others may occur in some people and there may be some side effects not yet known.

**Some rare side effects of Vaclovir include:**

- damage to the kidney, which gets better when Vaclovir treatment is stopped.
- unusual bruising or bleeding.

Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any bruising or bleeding, as it may indicate that the number of platelets (a type of blood cell responsible for blood clotting) in your blood are reduced.

- skin reactions which may include a rash, fever, facial swelling or blistering or peeling skin
- damage to the liver, which gets better when Vaclovir treatment is stopped.

**You should contact your doctor if you experience any of the following side effects which are more common in patients with kidney disease or in those taking high doses of Vaclovir:**

- sensitivity to UV light, such as development of a rash like sunburn even after short exposure to UV light.

- confusion or imagining sight or sounds (hallucinations)
- dizziness
- drowsiness

**Tell your doctor if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell, even if it is not on this list.**

## **After taking Vaclovir**

### **Storage**

**Keep this medicine where young children cannot reach it.**

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

**Keep Vaclovir in a cool, dry place where it stays below 25°C. Do not store them, or any other medicine, in a bathroom or near a sink.**

**Do not leave them in the car or on window sills.**

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

**Keep your tablets in their pack until it is time to take them.**

If you take the tablets out of their pack they may not keep well.

## **Disposal**

**If your doctor tells you to stop taking Vaclovir, or the tablets have passed their expiry date, ask your pharmacist what to do with any tablets left over.**

## **Product description**

### **What it looks like**

Vaclovir Valaciclovir (as hydrochloride) 500 mg tablets:  
White coloured, oval shaped, biconvex film coated tablet with break line on one side and plain on the other side. Blister packs of 8, 10, 30 and 42 tablets.

Bottles of 30 and 42 tablets.

### **Ingredients**

The active ingredient in Vaclovir tablets is valaciclovir.

The tablets also contain:

- microcrystalline cellulose
- magnesium stearate
- Opadry complete film coating system White OY-58900 (Proprietary Ingredient number 3446)

The tablets are gluten free.

## **Supplier**

Vaclovir is supplied by:

### **Alphapharm Pty Ltd**

Level 1, 30 The Bond

30-34 Hickson Road

Millers Point NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9298 3999

[www.alphapharm.com.au](http://www.alphapharm.com.au)

Australian registration numbers:

Vaclovir 500 Valaciclovir (as hydrochloride) 500mg tablet

Blister pack AUST R 153822

Bottles AUST R 153823

This leaflet was prepared on

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