



## Combivir® [COM-bih-veer] (lamivudine/zidovudine)



There are five classes of HIV medications (meds). They will not prevent or cure HIV. They limit how the virus makes copies of itself in your body. Combivir is in the class of meds called *nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors* (NRTIs or Nukes). It contains two meds, lamivudine (3TC) and zidovudine (AZT).

This drug is offered in a generic form.

### Who Should Take Combivir?

People over the age of 12

Note: Tell your doctor if you have or have had a blood, kidney or liver disease or a swollen pancreas before you take Combivir.

Be sure to see your doctor every 3 to 4 months. They will test how well your body responds to Combivir.

### How Is Combivir Taken?

Combivir is taken by mouth with or without food. It should be taken with a full glass of water.

### Side Effects

It is common to have side effects when you start HIV treatment. Make sure your doctor knows about any allergies and side effects you have had to other meds. Your doctor may change the type and/or amount of your meds.

What are the common side effects of Combivir?

- Headache
- Loose stool
- Upset stomach
- Feeling tired
- Cough

What are the more severe and rare side effects of Combivir?

- Anemia (low red blood cells). Signs include: tired, pale skin, sore throat, fever and chills.
- Lactic acidosis and severe liver problems. Signs include: sick to your stomach, weakness, shortness of breath, yellow skin or eyes, and pain in the upper stomach area.
- Pancreatitis. Signs include: sick to your stomach, loose stool, stomach pain and fever.
- Bone marrow problems
- Muscle pain
- Changes in where fat is stored on the body

Note: If it is hard to catch your breath, your throat closes, your lips, tongue or face swells

Take your HIV treatment just how your doctor tells you. Do not miss any doses, even if you feel well. When the meds are in your body, they will help stop the HIV.

Bring all of your meds and any supplements to your doctor visits. A "Brown Bag Check-up" can also help your doctor keep your records up to date and help you get better quality care.

or you get hives, you may be allergic to Combivir.

Always talk to your doctor before you stop any treatment they prescribe for you.

### **How Does Combivir Mix with Other Meds?**

You and your doctor should both know all the kinds of meds that you use. When you take two or more meds it can cause a bad *interaction*. This means that the meds do not mix well. This can lead to harmful side effects and hurt your treatment.



Tell your doctor if you also take other HIV meds or meds to treat:

- Acid reflux or heartburn
- Fungus
- Pneumocystis carinii
- Urinary tract infections
- Seizures or bipolar disorder
- Heroin withdrawal

#### **For more information**

Contact your Registered Nurse Care Manager, or call PHP Nurse Advice Line at: (800) 797-1717.

Visit the Medication Guide on the FDA website at: <http://www.fda.gov>

