

## Sustiva® [sus-TEE-vah] (efavirenz)



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. Sustiva is in the class of meds called *non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors* (NNRTIs or Non Nukes).

### Who Should Take Sustiva?

- Any person three months old or older can take Sustiva

Before you start Sustiva, tell your doctor if you:

- Have liver disease
- Have a mental illness or depression
- Have seizures or shakes
- Are pregnant

### How Is Sustiva Taken?

- Sustiva comes in a pill
- It should be taken with no food in your stomach, around bedtime. Do not eat for two hours before you take the pill.
- When you take Sustiva before bed, you may have less side effects
- Swallow Sustiva with water. Food could increase the number of side effects.

### Side Effects

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.

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 Sustiva?

- Rash
- Feel dizzy
- Sleep problems or strange dreams
- Get confused
- Hard to focus
- Headache
- Sick to your stomach
- Loose stool
- Changes in how the body stores fat
- Memory loss
- Loss of balance

What are the severe and rare side effects of Sustiva?

- Mental health problems such as:
  - severe depression
  - you see and hear things that are not there
  - thoughts of suicide

Note: Alcohol can make some side effects worse.

Some people are allergic to Sustiva. See a doctor right away if you have any of these signs:

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.

- Shortness of breath
- Rash
- Swollen face, lips, tongue or throat

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

### How Does Sustiva Mix with Other Meds?

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



Talk with your doctor if you take meds to treat:

- Allergies
- Asthma
- Heart disease
- Heartbeat problems
- Blood clots
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Fungus
- Parasites
- Malaria
- High cholesterol
- Endometriosis
- Acid reflux or heartburn
- Inflammation
- Migraine
- Parkinson's disease

- Seizures
- Heroin withdrawal
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Problems with sex function

There are some meds that might not mix well:

- Products with iron
- Antibiotics
- Corticosteroids
- Cough and cold medicines with chlorpheniramine
- Diuretics or water pills
- Birth control pills, patches, rings, shots or implants. You should use a second form of birth control (like condoms) with Sustiva.
- Other HIV meds

#### **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>

