

# Rilpivirine

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

- Rilpivirine is an antiretroviral medication used in the management of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection that prevents the replication of viruses. It reduces the number of viruses (viral load) in the body and keeps it at a low level.
- It is always given in combination with other anti-retroviral medications (combination therapy).
- It may also be given as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which is a short course of combination of different anti-retroviral medications after a possible exposure to the virus. PEP should ideally be started within 72h after a possible exposure.

## How should I take/use this medication?

- Take this medication with or after a full meal to increase absorption of the medication into the body. Taking this medication with a light snack or protein supplement drink alone is insufficient.
- This medication works best when the amount of medication in your body is kept at a constant level for the entire duration as prescribed. Do not stop taking this medication without the advice of your doctor. Remember to take it at the same time each day.
- Do not change the dose unless your doctor tells you to.

## What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

- It is important not to miss doses of this drug.
- If you missed the dose for less than 12 hours, take the tablet as soon as possible. Then take the next dose at your usual time.
- If you missed the dose for 12 hours or more, skip the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at your usual time.
- Do not double the next dose to make up for the missed dose.

## **What precautions should I take?**

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- You have kidney problems
- You have had a mental health problem
- You have any allergies
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding

## **What are some common side-effects of this medication?**

If any of the following effects persist or are severe, consult your doctor.

- Headache
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Drowsiness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomach upset

## What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - Itchy skin rashes over your whole body
  - Red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever
  - Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
  - Difficulty in breathing
- Symptoms of mood changes
  - Feeling sad or hopeless
  - Feeling anxious or restless
  - Have thoughts of hurting yourself or have tried to hurt yourself
- Change in body fat distribution (increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck, breast, and around the middle of your body. There may also be loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face.)
- Symptoms of infection (if you use Rilpivirine for PEP)
  - fever, sore throat, weakness, cough, or shortness of breath

## What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?

- If you take gastric medications known as antacids, such as products that contain aluminium, calcium carbonate, or magnesium hydroxide, you should take these antacids at least 2 hours before or 4 hours after Rilpivirine.
- If you take an H2-receptor antagonist (famotidine, cimetidine, or ranitidine), you should take these H2-receptor antagonists at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take Rilpivirine.
- Inform your doctor if you are taking other medications, especially, carbamazepine, dexamethasone, efavirenz, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, omeprazole, rabeprazole, pantoprazole, phenytoin, rifampicin, or St John's wort.
- Inform your doctor if you are taking over-the-counter medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice while taking this medication. Grapefruit products may undesirably increase the amount of medication in your body, resulting in higher risk of side effects.

## How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

## How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing it into the rubbish chute or bin.

### Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.*

