

Patient Medication Information for HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV PEP)

What is the risk of HIV infection after an exposure?

- **Most exposures do not result in infection.** The risk varies with the type of exposure and factors such as the amount of blood involved and the amount of virus in the infected material.
 - The average risk of getting HIV after exposure to known HIV-infected blood through a needlestick or cut is about one chance in 300 exposures.
 - The risk from a mucocutaneous (e.g., eye, nose or mouth) exposure to known HIV-infected blood is much less – about one chance in 1,000 exposures.

Why should PEP be considered?

- A study in healthcare workers following exposure to HIV-infected blood suggested early short term zidovudine (an antiretroviral medication) was associated with a significantly decreased risk of getting HIV. Combinations of antiretrovirals are likely even more effective.

What medications are recommended for PEP?

- Combivir® and Kaletra® are antiretroviral medications used in the *treatment* of individuals with HIV. They work by slowing the rate of HIV multiplication in the body.

Adults/Children 40kg or over:

- Combivir® ONE tablet every 12 hours (150mg lamivudine + 300mg zidovudine per tablet) **plus**
- Kaletra® TWO tablets every 12 hours (200mg lopinavir + 50mg ritonavir per tablet)

Less than 40kg: Refer to Ministry of Health website <http://www.ehealthsask.ca/services/manuals/Pages/hiv-guidelines.aspx>, Guidelines for the Management of Exposures to Blood and Body Fluids for recommendations using the adult tablets (Appendix 5).

How should these medications be taken?

- Treatment should be started promptly, preferably within 1-2 hours after the exposure.
- If the source is found to be HIV negative, these medications should be stopped.
- The medications in the kit are provided at no charge, however, if you are to complete the recommended 4 weeks (28 days) course, your doctor will provide you with an outpatient prescription. The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) covers the medication cost if the exposure is work-related so the appropriate paperwork must be initiated ASAP. If non work-related, the medications are covered by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan and the doctor (or pharmacist) must apply for EDS – Exception Drug Status indicating “for PEP”, or through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Branch for patients who have federal drug coverage.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

- It may take up to two days for a community pharmacy to obtain these medications, so take your prescription to the pharmacy as soon as possible.
- If you are unable to obtain the medications, contact the doctor immediately. If after hours, return to the Emergency Department to avoid missing doses.

- To ensure effectiveness, avoid missing doses. Take each dose as close to the scheduled time as possible to maintain the levels in your body. Do not skip doses. Consider setting an alarm as a reminder and place the medications in a dosette.
- Take with a meal or light snack to minimize side effects.

What should you do if you forget a dose?

- Take it as soon as you remember, then continue with your regular dosing schedule.

What are the side effects of Combivir® and Kaletra®?

- Some people experience allergic reactions to medications. **If you have any of the following symptoms soon after taking a dose, STOP taking the medication and tell your doctor, or go to an Emergency Department immediately.**
 - sudden wheeziness, chest pain or tightening;
 - swelling of eyelids, face or lips;
 - fever, chills, shortness of breath, heart palpitations;
 - “hives” or severe rash.
- **Combivir®** – Common side effects are generally mild and temporary and may include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, stomach cramps, insomnia and muscle weakness.
- **Kaletra®** – Common side effects are nausea, diarrhea, headache, rash. **NOTE:** It may reduce effectiveness of birth control pills and interact with many other medications (cholesterol lowering medications, steroid inhalers, fentanyl patches, etc.). Check with your pharmacist.

If any side effect is concerning, please call your doctor.

What other precautions should you follow while using antiretrovirals?

- Advise sexual partners of potential risk. Practice safer sex (e.g. use a condom).
- Avoid pregnancy.
- Stop breastfeeding.
- Avoid donating blood.
- Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or needles.
- Doses of medications may need to be adjusted depending on your health history. Tell your doctor if you:
 - had or have a problem with your kidneys;
 - had or have any liver disease, particularly hepatitis;
 - have any other medical conditions or illnesses;
 - are pregnant, plan on becoming pregnant, or are breast-feeding;
 - are taking **ANY** other medication (prescription, non-prescription, herbals, etc.).

<p>Ensure your pharmacist and/or doctor confirms the medications you take do not impair the benefit of these medications (i.e. interact), or lead to unwanted or severe side effects. Do not start other medications without first discussing them with your doctor or pharmacist.</p>

How should these medications be stored?

- Store in tightly closed containers in a cool (15-30°C), dry place protected from light.
- Avoid storage in high heat and/or humidity as this may decrease the activity of the medications.
- Keep out of reach of children.

If you have any questions or concerns about these medications, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

(Adapted from Vancouver Coastal)