

**OAK TREE CLINIC
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS/PARENTS**

DRUG NAME: LAMIVUDINE (3TC)

BRAND NAME: Epivir

THIS MEDICATION IS:

- An antiviral drug that slows the growth of HIV, the virus associated with AIDS. 3TC does not cure AIDS, but it helps by decreasing the amount of virus in the body.
- A type of drug called a nucleoside analogue (**Nukes**) that slows the rate of copying (reproduction) of HIV by stopping the action of an enzyme called reverse transcriptase.
- Recommended for patients who have symptoms of HIV disease, as well as for patients without symptoms, whose immune system is lower than it should be.
- Always used in combination with other antiviral medications

BENEFITS OF 3TC:

- It improves the function of the immune system, helping to prevent other infections that may occur in patients with HIV disease (**increases the CD4 counts**)
- It may help you gain weight and improve your energy level.

HOW TO TAKE LAMIVUDINE (3TC):

- 3TC can be taken with food or on an empty stomach. Most people prefer to take it with food as it helps decrease the side effects
- This medications may be taken with water, juice or milk.

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| YOUR 3TC DOSE IS: | TAKEN | TIMES A DAY |
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AVAILABILITY OF LAMIVUDINE (3TC):

ORAL LIQUID - FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

- 3TC is available as a strawberry-banana flavoured syrup. Each millilitre (mL or cc) contains 10 mg of the drug (10 mg/mL).
- 3TC syrup may be kept at room temperature.
- Always measure each dose with a specially marked measuring spoon or oral syringe to make sure that the dose is accurate.

TABLETS - FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS:

Lamivudine is supplied as a white, diamond-shaped tablet. Each tablet contains 150 mg.

IF YOU MISS A DOSE:

If you take your 3TC twice a day:

- If it is more than 6 hours before the next dose, then take missed dose as soon as you remember and then take the next dose at the normal time.
- But if it is less than 6 hours before the next dose, then forget about the missed dose and take the next dose at the normal time
- **Do NOT** give a double dose of this medication.
- If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking a dose or if you see bits of the tablets, then you should repeat the dose.

If you take your 3TC once a day:

- If it is more than 12 hours before the next dose, then take missed dose as soon as you remember and then take the next dose at the normal time.
- But if it is less than 12 hours before the next dose, then forget about the missed dose and take the next dose at the normal time
- **Do NOT** give a double dose of this medication.
- If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking a dose or if you see bits of the tablet/capsule, then you should repeat the dose.

PROBLEMS WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED:

Lamivudine is generally very well tolerated.

The following side effects sometimes happen, are usually very mild, and should go away within a week or two as your body gets used to the drug. Call the clinic pharmacist, nurse or doctor if they continue or are very bothersome:

- headache, diarrhea, fatigue, nausea, insomnia, mild abdominal pain, mild muscle aches
- any other symptom of concern to you

More serious side effects are much less common with 3TC than with other antiretrovirals, but can occur. Check with your doctor right away if any of the following side effects occur:

- aching, numbness, tingling, burning or pain in the legs, feet, arms or hands (peripheral neuropathy)
- severe stomach pain, nausea or vomiting (pancreatitis)
- skin rash, fever, mouth sores, or severe muscle aches and pains

Regular blood tests are important to follow your response to this drug.

- neutropenia (decreased white blood cells) is an uncommon side effect of lamivudine that can be easily identified by regular blood tests.

DRUGS WHICH CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN USED WITH LAMIVUDINE:

- Many drugs can be taken safely with lamivudine, but some may interact and cause unwanted effects. It is important to tell your doctor, pharmacist and nurse about all of the medicines you may take, **including natural herbal products** and those that you get without a prescription from your doctor, and to check with them before taking any new medicines.

CAUTIONS:

- Keep this medication out of the reach of children. Your doctor or Poison Control Centre should be contacted in the event of accidental overdose of this or any other medicine.