

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

**DRUG NAME:** Combination AZT 300 mg + 3TC 150 mg per tablet

**BRAND NAME:** Combivir

**THIS MEDICATION IS:**

- An antiviral drug that slows the growth of HIV, the virus associated with AIDS. Combivir does not cure AIDS, but it helps by decreasing the amount of virus in the body (**decreases the viral load**)
- 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.
- Always used in combination with other antiviral medications

**BENEFITS OF COMBIVIR:**

- 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.
- It will help to decrease muscle aches and night sweats.

**HOW TO TAKE Combivir:**

- This medicine can be taken with food or on an empty stomach. Most people prefer to take it with food.
- It should be taken at the same time each day.
- **DO NOT SWALLOW TABLETS DRY.** Take with a glass of water, juice or milk.

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| <b>YOUR COMBIVIR DOSE IS:</b> _____ <b>TAKEN</b> _____ <b>TIMES A DAY.</b> |
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Each Combivir tablet is equal to 300 mg of AZT and 150 mg of 3TC.

**IF YOU MISS A DOSE:**

- 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 tablet, then you should repeat the dose.

**PROBLEMS WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED:**

**The following side effects sometimes happen and usually go away as your body gets used to the drug in a few weeks. Call the clinic pharmacist, nurse or doctor if they continue or are very bothersome:**

**More common:**

- nausea, headache, difficulty sleeping, restlessness, and fatigue

**Less common:**

-hair thinning, increased frequency of urination, gas, bloating, decreased appetite, altered taste, a "spacey" feeling, changes in nail colour, and decreased sex drive

**Check with your right away doctor if any of the following side effects occur:**

- skin rash, fever, or severe muscle aches and pains
- nausea and vomiting which is very bothersome and does not go away in a day or two.
- aching, numbness, tingling, burning or pain in the legs, feet, arms, hands (peripheral neuropathy)
- severe stomach pains, nausea, and vomiting (pancreatitis)

**The following side effects may occur and will be monitored by your doctor by regular blood tests. These effects are reversible and can be managed by reducing the dose or stopping the drug for a period of time:**

- bone marrow suppression - this can result in low red blood cells (anemia) and low white blood cells (neutropenia). It is important that the doctor's visits be kept as scheduled so that the blood can be checked regularly, especially when the drug is first started.
- liver function tests may become elevated - this will be monitored routinely by your doctor if necessary.

**DRUGS WHICH CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN TAKEN WITH Combivir:**

- Many drugs may be safely taken with Combivir, 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 any natural herbal products and those that you get without a prescription from your doctor, and to check with them before taking any new medicines.

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>R</sup>) may be used occasionally but should not be taken on a regular (daily) basis. If needed for pain or fever, aspirin (ASA) may be used. Persistent fever should be reported to the doctor.

- Do not drink alcohol during the first month of treatment with AZT. After that, it is suggested that alcohol be avoided or taken only occasionally.

**CAUTIONS:**

- Throw away any expired or leftover medication.
- Keep out of the reach of all children. The doctor or Poison Control Centre should be contacted in the event of accidental overdose of this or any other drug.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

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**COMBIVIR20**