

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

DRUG NAME: d4T (Stavudine)

BRAND NAME: Zerit®

THIS MEDICATION IS:

- An antiviral drug that slows the growth of HIV, the virus associated with AIDS. D4T 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 d4T:

- 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 d4T:

- d4T may be taken with or without food, and should be taken every 12 hours. Take it at the same times each day if possible. Your pharmacist can help set up a medication schedule that works best for you.

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| YOUR D4T DOSE IS | TAKEN | TIMES A DAY |
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AVAILABILITY OF d4T:

CAPSULES :

d4T is available as 15 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg and 40 mg capsules.

ORAL SOLUTION

d4T is available as a fruit flavoured oral solution containing 1 mg of stavudine per ml (1mg/ml).

The solution is stable for 30 days **IF KEPT REFRIGERATED.**

Shake the bottle **well** before pouring out each dose.

Always measure each dose with the specially marked spoon, cup or oral syringe provided by the pharmacist.

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 capsule, then you should repeat the dose.

PROBLEMS WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED:

**A serious possible side effect of d4T is peripheral neuropathy (aching, numbness, tingling, burning or pain in the hands, feet or legs)
It is very important that you check with your doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms.**

The following side effects are less common-be sure to tell the doctor or pharmacist if they occur:

- skin rash
- fever and joint pain or muscle pain
- severe stomach pain, or nausea and vomiting, which may be a sign of pancreatitis

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

- diarrhea, headache, weakness and tiredness, decreased appetite or mild upset stomach.
- any other symptoms of concern to you.

DRUGS WHICH CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN USED WITH d4T:

Many drugs can be taken safely with d4T, but some may interact and cause unwanted effects. These include other medications that can cause peripheral neuropathy, which may increase the chance of this occurring- such as Dapsone, didanosine (ddl), ethambutol, ethionamide, hydralazine, isoniazid, lithium, metronidazole (Flagyl), nitrofurantoin, phenytoin (Dilantin), or zalcitabine (ddC).

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.

Do not drink alcohol during the first month of treatment with d4T. After that, it is suggested that alcohol be avoided or taken only occasionally.

CAUTIONS:

- Any expired or leftover medicine should be returned to the clinic.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- The doctor or Poison Control Centre should be contacted in the event of accidental overdose of this or any other medicine.