

OAK TREE CLINIC
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS/PARENTS

DRUG NAME: NEVIRAPINE

BRAND NAME: VIRAMUNE®

THIS MEDICATION IS:

- An antiviral drug that slows the growth of HIV, the virus associated with AIDS. Nevirapine 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 non-nucleoside analogue (**Non-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 NEVIRAPINE:

- 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 increase appetite which helps patients to gain weight and improve their energy level.
- It decreases muscle aches and night sweats.

AVAILABILITY OF NEVIRAPINE:

TABLETS – FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS:

Nevirapine is available as a 200 mg tablet and should be stored in a tightly closed container at room temperature.

ORAL SUSPENSION – FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

- The suspension contains 10 mg of nevirapine per mL (10 mg/mL).
- It should be stored at room temperature
- Always measure each dose with a specially marked measuring spoon or oral syringe to make sure that the dose is accurate

HOW TO TAKE NEVIRAPINE:

Adults and Older Children:

- The usual adult dose is 200 mg (1 tablet) once a day for 14 days, then 200 mg (1 tablet) twice daily. Starting at a lower dose for the first 2 weeks has been shown to decrease the development of rash, a common side effect with nevirapine. If you develop a rash during the first 14 days of treatment, do not increase your dose until the rash has resolved. Call the Clinic for advice.
- An alternate dosing schedule is 200 mg (1 tablet) once a day for 14 days, then 400 mg (2 tablets) once a day. Starting at a lower dose for the first 2 weeks has been shown to decrease the development of rash, a common side effect with nevirapine. If you develop a rash during the first 14 days of treatment, do not increase your dose until the rash has resolved. Call the Clinic for advice.
- Nevirapine should be swallowed whole and can be taken with or without food. Try to take it at the same time each day.

DOSING OF NEVIRAPINE

Your dose of NEVIRAPINE is _____ mg /mL _____ times a day.

IF YOU MISS A DOSE:

If you take your nevirapine 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 tablet/capsule, then you should repeat the dose.

If you take your nevirapine 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:

Check with your doctor immediately if you develop a rash while taking nevirapine.

- The most common side effect of nevirapine is rash. Up to 1 in 5 patients starting nevirapine may experience a rash.
- Most rashes occur in the first 6 weeks of taking nevirapine.
- Rash is usually mild to moderate, with or without itching, located primarily on the face, trunk, arms and legs.
- In most cases the rash can be treated with anti-inflammatory medications (eg. Advil[®], Naproxen[®]) and antihistamines (eg. Reactine[®], Claritin[®]).
- Stop taking nevirapine and notify your doctor immediately if you develop a severe rash or a rash associated with symptoms such as fever, blistering, mouth sores, conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye due to infection), swelling, muscle or joint aches, or a general feeling of being unwell.

The following side effects sometimes happen. Call the clinic pharmacist, nurse or doctor if they continue or are very bothersome:

Headache, nausea, diarrhea, sedation and fatigue

The following side effects may occur and will be monitored by your doctor by regular blood tests.

Liver function tests may become elevated

DRUGS WHICH CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN USED WITH NEVIRAPINE:

Nevirapine can interact with the following medications and cause unwanted effects:

- **Cimetidine (Tagamet[®])**- may increase blood levels of nevirapine, possibly increasing the chance of side effects.
- **Macrolide antibiotics eg. erythromycin, clarithromycin (Biaxin[®]), azithromycin (Zithromax[®])** – may increase blood levels of nevirapine, possibly increasing the chance of side effects.
- **Rifabutin (Mycobutin[®]) or Rifampin (Rimactane[®])** – nevirapine may make them less effective by
- **Protease inhibitors eg. indinavir, ritonavir, saquinavir** – nevirapine may decrease their blood levels, possibly making them less effective. If you are taking a protease inhibitor with nevirapine, this will be discussed with you in detail.
- **Methadone** – nevirapine may change your methadone requirements. You may experience withdrawal symptoms. Discuss this your methadone doctor.
- **Oral contraceptives** – nevirapine may decrease their blood levels, which means they may not be effective. Women taking birth control pills should use a different method of birth control, such as condoms, while taking nevirapine.

*It is important to tell your doctor, pharmacist, and nurse about all of the medication 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 medications.

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