



## ZIDOVUDINE DRUG INFORMATION FOR THE PARENT/CAREGIVER

*\*\* Please review and send home with the baby's caregiver \*\**

### ZIDOVUDINE (AZT, Retrovir®)

#### WHY is this medication being prescribed for your baby?

- Zidovudine is an antiretroviral drug that slows the growth of the HIV virus. Zidovudine has shown to decrease the risk of a mother passing the HIV virus to her baby when it is taken by the mother in pregnancy and delivery and by the baby for up to 6 weeks after birth.
- Zidovudine is given as part of a protocol that has two parts:
- Mother: During labour and delivery, zidovudine will be given intravenously to the mother until the baby is delivered
- Baby: Zidovudine is given by mouth for *up to six weeks*. The first dose of zidovudine is given as soon as possible after birth. Make sure you know the correct dose for your baby before you leave the hospital.

#### HOW should this medication be taken?

**Instructions:** *Give before, during, or after a feed.*

**Infants born at or after 35 weeks:** The dose of zidovudine liquid for your baby is:

\_\_\_\_\_ mg (which is \_\_\_\_\_ mL) given orally at the following times:

Give twice daily at: \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm) \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm)

Stop zidovudine on: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Pre-term infant born before 35 weeks:** The dose of zidovudine liquid for your baby is:

\_\_\_\_\_ mg (which is \_\_\_\_\_ mL) given orally at the following times:

Give twice daily at: \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm) \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm) until \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**and then:** \_\_\_\_\_ mg (which is \_\_\_\_\_ mL) given at the following times:

Give twice daily at: \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm) \_\_\_\_\_ (am / pm) until \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Stop zidovudine on: \_\_\_\_\_

- Zidovudine is available as a strawberry flavored syrup. Each milliliter (mL) contains 10 mg of the drug (written as 10 mg/mL on the label).

#### Always measure each dose with the specially marked oral syringe provided.

- Zidovudine can be given before, after or during a feed. To give the medicine, gently place the oral syringe in the baby's mouth just inside the cheek and give 4 or 5 gentle pushes on the plunger of the

syringe. Allow the baby to swallow the liquid between pushes on the plunger to ensure that the baby does not gag or choke. Ensure that the baby receives the full dose of zidovudine.

- It is not a good idea to mix zidovudine with the baby's formula. The reason is that if the baby does not drink all of the formula, he/she will not get the full dose.
- Store the medication at room temperature. *Do not store in your bathroom as heat and moisture may cause the medicine to lose its effectiveness.*
- Keep out of the reach of children. The doctor or the Poison Control Centre should be contacted in the event of accidental ingestion of this or any other medication.

### What should you do if your baby MISSES a dose?

- If you forget to give your baby his/her dose of zidovudine, give it to him/her as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your baby's next dose, do NOT double the dose; just carry on with the regular schedule.
- If your baby vomits within 15 minutes of the dose, give another dose if possible. If it is more than 15 minutes after the dose, do NOT give another dose just give the next dose when scheduled.
- ***\*\*It is very important not to miss any doses of this medicine.*** If you are having trouble remembering to give this medication, you may find it helpful to set an alarm on your watch or phone to help remind you.

### What POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS can this medication cause?

- As with any medication, side effects can rarely occur. Mild anemia (low red blood cells) and neutropenia (low white blood cells) has been noted in some babies receiving zidovudine. These conditions are usually mild and resolve when the medication dosage is reduced or the medication is discontinued.
- Blood tests will also be done on your baby at 2 and 4 weeks after birth to check for these side effects. ***\*\*It is very important to keep all follow-up medical appointments for the baby.***
- Do not stop a medication or make changes to your baby's treatment unless recommended by your doctor.
- Zidovudine can interact with other medications. It is important that your physician or pharmacist know about other prescription and non-prescription medications your baby is taking. Acetaminophen (Atasol<sup>®</sup>, Tempra<sup>®</sup>, and Tylenol<sup>®</sup>) may be given safely with zidovudine.

### Oral Syringes and Medication

- You will be given a 240 mL bottle of zidovudine when discharged from the hospital, which is more than enough to complete the six weeks of therapy. Bring any expired or leftover medications to the Oak Tree Clinic at a follow-up visit.
- A supply of oral syringes will be provided. The syringe should be washed with soap and water and thoroughly rinsed with previously boiled water after each use. If you run out of syringes you may contact your local public health nurse to obtain a replacement supply.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE MEDICATIONS YOU CAN CALL THE PHARMACIST AT THE OAK TREE CLINIC IN VANCOUVER ([604-875-2212](tel:604-875-2212))**

**Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Evenings or weekends you can call the Centre for Excellence in HIV Pharmacy Hotline at [1-888-511-6222](tel:1-888-511-6222). This is a toll-free number from anywhere in B.C.**