



Truvada



What is *Truvada*?

Truvada is a medication used to treat HIV. It is a combination of two antiretroviral drugs called emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil. These are combined in one pill, taken once a day along with another antiretroviral drug.

It combines 200mg emtricitabine and 245mg tenofovir disoproxil in a blue, capsule-shaped tablet. The tablets have '701' on one side and 'GILEAD' on the other.

How does *Truvada* work?

Truvada combines two drugs in one pill. Emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil are from a class of drugs known as NRTIs (nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors).

Your doctor will prescribe *Truvada* as part of your HIV treatment, along with an antiretroviral from another class of drugs. It is important to take all the drugs as prescribed, every day.

Each drug class works against HIV in a different way.

The aim of HIV treatment is to reduce the level of HIV in your body (viral load). Ideally, your viral load should become so low that it is undetectable. Taking HIV treatment and having an undetectable viral load protects your immune system and stops HIV being passed on to someone else during sex.

How do I take *Truvada*?

You should take *Truvada* once a day, ideally with food.

HIV treatment works best if you take it every day. If you forget to take a dose of *Truvada*, and realise within 12 hours, then take it then and take your next dose at the usual time. If it's less than 12 hours until your next dose is due, then don't take a double dose, just skip the dose you've forgotten and carry on.

If you regularly forget to take your treatment, or you aren't taking it for another reason, it's important to talk to your doctor about this.



What are the side-effects of *Truvada*?

All drugs have possible side-effects. It's a good idea to talk to your doctor about possible side-effects before you start taking a drug. If you experience something that might be a side-effect, talk to your doctor about what can be done. A full list of side-effects, including less common side-effects, should be included in the leaflet that comes in the packaging with *Truvada*.

We generally divide side-effects into two types:

Common – a side-effect that occurs in at least one in a hundred patients (more than 1%) who take this drug.

Rare – a side-effect that occurs in fewer than one in a hundred patients (less than 1%) who take this drug.

The most common side-effects of *Truvada* are diarrhoea, being sick (vomiting), feeling sick (nausea), dizziness, headache, rash, feeling weak, pain, stomach pain, difficulty sleeping, abnormal dreams, feeling bloated, flatulence, allergic reactions, such as wheezing, swelling or feeling light-headed.

Other side-effects might not have noticeable symptoms, but would be picked up by your regular blood tests – such as decreases in phosphate in the blood.

Truvada can affect the kidneys and bones, so it is not recommended for people with pre-existing severe kidney disease. Your kidney function will be monitored by your clinic.

Does *Truvada* interact with other drugs?

It's important that your doctor and pharmacist know about any other drugs you are taking. That includes medicine prescribed by another doctor, drugs you have bought from a high-street chemist, herbal and alternative treatments, and recreational drugs.

Some medicines should not be taken together because if they are this can cause serious side-effects, or it can stop one or both of the drugs from working. Other drug interactions are less dangerous but still need to be taken seriously. If levels of one drug are affected, you may need to change the dose you take.

A list of drugs, known to have interactions with *Truvada*, should be included in the leaflet that comes in the packaging with *Truvada*. Tell your doctor if you are taking any of these drugs, and other drugs that are not on the list.

You should not take *Truvada* with any of the following drugs:

- tenofovir alafenamide
- lamivudine
- adefovir dipivoxil.

Taking *Truvada* with some other drugs can increase the risk of kidney damage. It is very important to tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following drugs:

- aminoglycosides (for bacterial infection)
- amphotericin B (for fungal infection)
- foscarnet (for viral infection)
- ganciclovir (for viral infection)
- pentamidine (for infections)
- vancomycin (for bacterial infection)
- interleukin-2 (to treat cancer)
- cidofovir (for viral infection)
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, to relieve bone or muscle pains).

Can I take *Truvada* in pregnancy?

There are other things which are important to your health and HIV care, and which you and your doctor may take into account when making decisions about your treatment. For example, if you are considering having a baby, or want to start taking contraception.

Truvada is not usually used for women who are pregnant or want to get pregnant, but it might be considered. There are some data on the use of *Truvada* in pregnancy and there have not been problems with its use. However, if you decide to use *Truvada* during pregnancy, your doctor may recommend regular tests to monitor your baby's development.

Truvada is not recommended if you are breastfeeding.

If you are considering having a baby, or think you might be pregnant, talk to your doctor as soon as possible about which drug combination would be right for you. It is important to take antiretroviral treatment during pregnancy to prevent passing HIV from mother to baby.

Talking to your doctor

If you have any concerns about your treatment or other aspects of your health, it's important to talk to your doctor about them.



For example, if you have a symptom or side-effect or if you are having problems taking your treatment every day, it's important that your doctor knows about this. If you are taking any other medication or recreational drugs, or if you have another medical condition, this is also important for your doctor to know about.

Building a relationship with a doctor may take time. You may feel very comfortable talking to your doctor, but some people find it more difficult, particularly when talking about sex, mental health, or symptoms they find embarrassing. It's also easy to forget things you wanted to talk about.

Preparing for an appointment can be very helpful. Take some time to think about what you are going to say. You might find it helpful to talk to someone else first, or to make some notes and bring them to your appointment. Our online tool *Talking points* may help you to prepare for your next appoint – visit www.aidsmap.com/talking-points

*For detailed information on this drug, visit the **Truvada** pages in the HIV treatments directory.*

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We recommend that this information should always be used in conjunction with professional medical advice.

This factsheet is produced by an organisation called NAM, and has been reviewed by members of our volunteer panels of people living with HIV and medical professionals. We welcome your feedback on our information resources.

NAM provides up-to-date and impartial HIV information. Please visit us at our website where you can read the latest HIV news and sign up for free email updates.

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