

# iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

## Acyclovir 400 mg

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Acyclovir 400 mg is an antiviral medication used to manage and treat infections caused by certain types of herpes viruses, including cold sores, genital herpes, and shingles.

- **ActiveIngredient:** Acyclovir
  - **DosageForm:** Tablets
  - **Dosage:** 400 mg
  - **Indications:** Herpes Virus Infections (e.g., cold sores, genital herpes, shingles)
  - **Manufacturer:** Various manufacturers
  - **Storage:** Store at room temperature, away from direct light and moisture. Keep out of reach of children.
  - **Market Price:** 0.42
  - **Drug Status:** Prescription Only
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## Description

Acyclovir 400 mg is an antiviral medication commonly used to manage and treat infections caused by the herpes virus, including genital herpes, cold sores, and shingles. While it does not cure these viral infections, it helps to reduce the symptoms, prevent outbreaks, and speed up the healing process. Acyclovir works by interfering with the viral replication process, thus controlling the spread of the infection within the body. It's available in various forms, including oral tablets, and is often prescribed as part of a long-term treatment plan to manage recurrent outbreaks.

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## General Instructions

When taking Acyclovir 400 mg, it's important to follow your doctor's instructions closely to ensure effective treatment. The typical dosage is 2-5 times daily, depending on the type of infection and severity of symptoms. Acyclovir can be taken with or without food, but it's recommended to drink plenty of water throughout the day to prevent dehydration and support kidney function. Always take the medication at evenly spaced intervals to maintain a consistent level of the drug in your bloodstream. Do not skip doses, and complete the entire course even if you feel better before the treatment ends, as stopping early may result in the infection returning or worsening.

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## Side Effects

Common Side Effects of Acyclovir 400 mg: Nausea: Some users may experience mild nausea, especially when starting the medication. Taking Acyclovir with food can help reduce this discomfort. Diarrhea: A common digestive side effect, diarrhea can occur but is usually temporary and mild. Headache: Headaches may occur but are often mild and go away as your body adjusts to the medication. Fatigue: Some individuals may feel tired or fatigued while taking Acyclovir 400 mg. Serious Side Effects of Acyclovir 400 mg: Kidney Issues: Acyclovir can affect kidney function. Symptoms like changes in urination, lower back pain, or blood in the urine may indicate kidney problems and should be reported to a doctor immediately. Neurological Side

Effects: Confusion, dizziness, or mood changes are rare but possible. These are more likely in older adults or those with kidney issues. Allergic Reactions: Though rare, signs of an allergic reaction include rashes, itching, swelling (especially of the face, tongue, or throat), and difficulty breathing. If you notice any severe or unusual side effects while taking Acyclovir 400 mg, stop the medication and seek medical advice promptly.

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## Uses

Acyclovir 400 mg is an antiviral medication primarily used to treat infections caused by herpes viruses. These infections include: Cold sores: Acyclovir helps reduce the severity and frequency of cold sores caused by the herpes simplex virus. Genital herpes: It is commonly prescribed for managing outbreaks of genital herpes and helps lower the risk of spreading the virus to others. Shingles (Herpes Zoster): Acyclovir is used to treat shingles, caused by the varicella-zoster virus, reducing the pain and speeding up the healing of blisters. Chickenpox: In some cases, Acyclovir is used to treat chickenpox in people with weakened immune systems.

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## Safety advice

### Interactions Alcohol:

- Consult your doctor
- While there are no known direct interactions between Acyclovir and alcohol, drinking alcohol may increase the risk of dehydration and kidney problems, especially during long-term use. It's best to consult your doctor.

### Interactions Other Medications:

- Consult your doctor
- Acyclovir may interact with medications that affect kidney function, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and certain antibiotics. Always inform your healthcare provider of any other medications you're taking.

### Special Groups Pregnancy:

- Consult your doctor
- Acyclovir should only be used during pregnancy if the benefits outweigh the risks. Your doctor will assess whether it is safe for you to take Acyclovir if you are pregnant.

### Special Groups Breastfeeding:

- Safe if prescribed
- Acyclovir passes into breast milk in small amounts. If you are breastfeeding, consult your doctor before using this medication to assess any potential risks to your baby.

### Special Groups Elderly:

- Use with caution
- Elderly patients are more susceptible to kidney problems, and dosage adjustments may be needed. Regular kidney function monitoring is recommended while using Acyclovir.

### Special Groups Children:

- Safe if prescribed
- Acyclovir is considered safe for children when prescribed by a doctor. The dosage may vary depending on the child's age and weight.

### Effects on Activities Driving:

- Use with caution

- Acyclovir may cause dizziness or confusion in some individuals. If you experience these symptoms, avoid driving or operating machinery until you feel better.

### **Effects on Activities Operating Machinery:**

- Use with caution
  - As with driving, operating machinery should be avoided if Acyclovir causes any side effects that could impair your ability to work safely.
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## **Concerns**

While Acyclovir 400 mg is generally well-tolerated, there are some concerns patients should be aware of:

**Long-term Use:** Continuous or long-term use of Acyclovir may lead to decreased effectiveness, as viruses could potentially develop resistance to the medication. It's important to use it only as directed by your healthcare provider and not to exceed the recommended duration. **Kidney Function:** Acyclovir can affect kidney function, especially in patients with pre-existing kidney issues or those who are dehydrated. Drinking plenty of fluids during treatment is essential to support kidney health and prevent complications.

**Dehydration:** This drug may increase the risk of dehydration, particularly in elderly patients or those using it for prolonged periods. Ensure you stay hydrated to help your body process the medication efficiently. When

**Not to Use:** Acyclovir 400 mg should be avoided in certain situations to prevent adverse effects or complications: **Allergic Reactions:** Do not use Acyclovir if you are allergic to acyclovir or valacyclovir.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include rash, itching, swelling, or difficulty breathing. Consult your doctor immediately if you experience any of these. **Severe Kidney Problems:** Individuals with severe kidney impairment or those on dialysis should avoid using Acyclovir unless advised by a healthcare professional, as the drug may accumulate in the body and worsen kidney function. **Dehydration:** Avoid using Acyclovir if you are severely dehydrated, as the medication can put additional stress on the kidneys. Ensure proper

hydration before starting the treatment. **Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:** Unless explicitly prescribed by a doctor, Acyclovir should not be used during pregnancy or breastfeeding due to potential risks to the baby.

Always consult a healthcare provider before taking this medication in these situations. **Weakened Immune System:** Patients with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV or cancer, may need closer monitoring while taking Acyclovir, as their bodies may respond differently to antiviral medications.

**Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:** Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should consult their healthcare provider about the potential risks and benefits of using Acyclovir. While it is sometimes prescribed during pregnancy, careful consideration is necessary.

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## **Warnings**

Before starting Acyclovir 400 mg, consider the following warnings to ensure safe and effective use: **Kidney Function:** Acyclovir can affect kidney function, especially in individuals with pre-existing kidney disease or dehydration. Ensure you stay well-hydrated during treatment and inform your doctor if you have any kidney conditions. Your dosage may need to be adjusted. **Elderly Patients:** Older adults are more susceptible to the side effects of Acyclovir, particularly kidney problems. Close monitoring may be required, and lower doses might be recommended for this population. **Neurological Effects:** In rare cases, Acyclovir can cause confusion, hallucinations, and seizures, especially in elderly patients or those with renal impairment. If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately. **Hydration:** Proper hydration is crucial while taking Acyclovir to help protect kidney function. Drink plenty of fluids throughout the course of your treatment. **Use in Children:** The use of Acyclovir in children should be closely monitored, and the dosage adjusted according to the child's age and weight. Consult your pediatrician before giving this medication to children. **Immunocompromised Patients:** People with weakened immune systems, such as those undergoing chemotherapy or living with HIV, may require higher doses of Acyclovir or longer treatment courses. Always consult your doctor for the best course of action in these cases.

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## Dosage

The dosage of Acyclovir 400 mg depends on the specific condition being treated, the patient's age, weight, and overall health. Follow your doctor's instructions for the correct dosage, but here are general guidelines: For Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex Virus): The typical dosage is 400 mg taken orally every 8 hours for 5 days. In some cases, your doctor may adjust the dosage or duration based on your condition. For Genital Herpes: The usual dosage is 400 mg taken orally every 8 hours for 7-10 days. For long-term suppression, a lower dosage of 400 mg twice daily may be recommended. For Shingles (Herpes Zoster): The recommended dosage is 800 mg taken orally every 4 hours while awake, for a total of 5 doses daily, over a period of 7-10 days. For Chickenpox (Varicella): The standard dosage is 800 mg taken orally 4 times a day for 5 days. For Herpes Simplex Encephalitis: High doses of Acyclovir are often required, usually administered intravenously, but your doctor will provide specific instructions based on your condition. Administration Tips: Take Acyclovir with or without food. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and support kidney function. Follow the prescribed dosage schedule carefully. Do not skip doses or double up on missed doses. Adjustments to the dosage may be necessary based on individual response and specific health conditions. Always adhere to your healthcare provider's recommendations for the most effective treatment.

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## Interactions

Acyclovir 400 mg may interact with other medications and substances, which can affect its effectiveness or increase the risk of side effects. Here's a summary of important interactions: **Kidney-Affecting Medications:** Drugs that impact kidney function, such as certain diuretics or medications used to treat high blood pressure, can increase the risk of kidney problems when taken with Acyclovir. Ensure your doctor is aware of all medications you are taking. **Other Antiviral Medications:** Combining Acyclovir with other antiviral drugs may lead to increased side effects or reduced effectiveness. Consult your doctor before using other antiviral medications alongside Acyclovir. **Probenecid:** This medication, used to treat gout, can interfere with the elimination of Acyclovir from the body, potentially increasing its levels and the risk of side effects. Inform your healthcare provider if you are taking Probenecid. **Live Vaccines:** Live vaccines should be used cautiously in individuals taking Acyclovir, as the medication might interfere with the vaccine's effectiveness. Discuss vaccination options with your healthcare provider. **Precautions:** Always provide your healthcare provider with a complete list of medications, including over-the-counter drugs and supplements, to avoid potential interactions. Regular monitoring may be required if you are on multiple medications that affect the kidneys or immune system.

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## FAQs

- **What is Acyclovir 400 mg used for?**

Acyclovir 400 mg is an antiviral medication used to treat infections caused by herpes viruses, including cold sores, genital herpes, and shingles. It helps to reduce the severity and duration of these infections but does not cure herpes.

- **How should I take Acyclovir 400 mg?**

Acyclovir 400 mg should be taken as directed by your doctor, usually 2-5 times a day depending on your condition. It can be taken with or without food. Make sure to take it at regular intervals to maintain consistent levels of the medication in your body.

- **Can Acyclovir 400 mg prevent herpes outbreaks?**

Yes, Acyclovir 400 mg can be used to help prevent herpes outbreaks, especially if you take it regularly. It can also reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others.

- **What should I do if I miss a dose of Acyclovir 400 mg?**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it's almost time for your next dose, skip the

missed one and continue with your regular schedule. Do not take two doses at once to make up for the missed one.

- **Can I take Acyclovir 400 mg with other medications?**

Acyclovir can interact with other medications, including drugs that affect your kidneys. It's important to inform your doctor about any other medications or supplements you're taking to avoid any harmful interactions.

- **What are the common side effects of Acyclovir 400 mg?**

Common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, headache, and tiredness. These are usually mild, but if you experience severe side effects like confusion or kidney problems, contact your doctor immediately.

- **Can I take Acyclovir 400 mg if I have kidney disease?**

If you have kidney disease, your doctor may adjust your dose of Acyclovir or monitor your kidney function during treatment. It's important to inform your doctor about any kidney problems before starting the medication.

- **Does Acyclovir 400 mg affect fertility?**

Acyclovir 400 mg is not known to affect fertility. It works by slowing the growth of the herpes virus, but it does not impact reproductive health.

- **Can I take Acyclovir 400 mg every day?**

Yes, Acyclovir 400 mg can be prescribed for daily use to help prevent frequent herpes outbreaks, especially for people with recurrent infections. Always follow your doctor's instructions on dosage and frequency.

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## Other Details

**Formulations Available:** Acyclovir is available in various forms, including oral tablets, topical creams, and intravenous injections, allowing for flexibility in treatment based on the severity of the infection and patient needs. **Administration Tips:** For optimal effectiveness, ensure that you take Acyclovir exactly as prescribed. Consistency is key to managing herpes virus infections effectively. Do not skip doses, and complete the full course of treatment even if symptoms improve before finishing the medication. **Missed Dose:** If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it's close to your next scheduled dose, skip the missed dose—do not double up to make up for the missed dose. **Drug Interactions:** Acyclovir may interact with other medications, particularly those that affect kidney function. Inform your healthcare provider of all other medications and supplements you are taking to avoid potential interactions. **Hydration:** Maintain adequate hydration while using Acyclovir, especially if you are taking higher doses or have a history of kidney issues. This helps reduce the risk of kidney-related side effects. **Monitoring:** Regular follow-ups with your healthcare provider may be necessary to monitor your response to the medication and adjust dosages if needed. Report any new or worsening symptoms promptly. **Conclusion** Acyclovir 400 mg is a widely used antiviral medication effective in managing various herpes virus infections, including cold sores, genital herpes, and shingles. By inhibiting the replication of the herpes virus, Acyclovir helps reduce the severity and duration of these infections. While generally well-tolerated, it's crucial to follow the prescribed dosage and administration guidelines to ensure the medication's effectiveness and minimize potential side effects. Regular communication with your healthcare provider is important to monitor your progress and address any concerns or adverse effects promptly. Adherence to treatment, proper hydration, and awareness of possible drug interactions are key to optimizing outcomes and managing the condition effectively. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice and guidance based on your individual health needs.

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## References

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