

# iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

## Retrovir

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  - **Manufacturer:**
  - **Storage:**
  - **Market Price:**
  - **Drug Status:**
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## Description

Side Effects Headache, nausea, vomiting, trouble sleeping, or loss of appetite may occur. If any of these effects last or get worse, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly. Remember that this medication has been prescribed because your doctor has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects. As your immune system gets stronger, it can begin to fight off infections you already had, possibly causing disease symptoms to come back. You could also have symptoms if your immune system becomes overactive. This reaction may happen at any time (soon after starting HIV treatment or many months later). Get medical help right away if you have any serious symptoms, including: unexplained weight loss, severe tiredness, muscle aches/weakness that doesn't go away, headaches that are severe or don't go away, joint pain, numbness/tingling of the hands/feet/arms/legs, vision changes, signs of infection (such as fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, trouble breathing, cough, non-healing skin sores), signs of an overactive thyroid (such as irritability, nervousness, heat intolerance, fast/pounding/irregular heartbeat, bulging eyes, unusual growth in the neck/thyroid known as a goiter), signs of a certain nerve problem known as Guillain-Barre syndrome (such as unsteadiness, loss of coordination, trouble swallowing/speaking/chewing, trouble moving your eyes). Tell your doctor right away if you have any serious side effects, including: mental/mood changes (such as depression, anxiety, confusion), easy bruising/bleeding, skin/fingernail color changes. Get medical help right away if you have any very serious side effects, including: seizures. Loss of body fat (such as in the face, arms, legs, and buttocks) may occur while you are taking this medication. This effect may be permanent. Tell your doctor right away if you notice any changes in body fat. A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare. However, get medical help right away if you notice any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, including: rash, itching/swelling (especially of the face/tongue/throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing. This is not a complete list of possible side effects. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist. In the US – Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or at [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch). In Canada – Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to Health Canada at 1-866-234-2345. Uses This drug is used with other HIV medications to help control HIV infection. It helps to decrease the amount of HIV in your body so your immune system can work better. This lowers your chance of getting HIV complications (such as new infections, cancer) and improves your quality of life. Zidovudine belongs to a class of drugs known as nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors-NRTIs. Zidovudine is used in pregnant women to prevent passing the HIV virus to the unborn

baby. This medication is also used in newborns born to mothers infected with HIV to prevent infection in the newborns. Zidovudine is not a cure for HIV infection. To decrease your risk of spreading HIV disease to others, continue to take all HIV medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Use an effective barrier method (latex or polyurethane condoms/dental dams) during sexual activity as directed by your doctor. Do not share personal items (such as needles/syringes, toothbrushes, and razors) that may have contacted blood or other body fluids. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details.

**How to use Retrovir** Take this medication by mouth with or without food as directed by your doctor, usually 2 to 3 times daily. Take this medication with a full glass of water (8 ounces/240 milliliters) unless your doctor directs you otherwise. If you are using the liquid form of this medication, carefully measure the dose using a special measuring device/spoon. Do not use a household spoon because you may not get the correct dose. The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to treatment. For children, the dosage is also based on weight. Pregnant women may need to take this medication 5 times a day. Newborns are usually given the liquid form every 6 hours for 6 weeks after birth to prevent infection. Take this medication 2 hours before or after taking clarithromycin. Clarithromycin may prevent your body from fully absorbing zidovudine. For the best effect, take this medication at evenly spaced times. To help you remember, take this medication at the same times every day. It is very important to continue taking this medication (and other HIV medications) exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not skip any doses. Refill your medication before you run out. Do not take more or less of this drug than prescribed or stop taking it (or other HIV medicines) even for a short time unless directed to do so by your doctor. Skipping or changing your dose without approval from your doctor may cause the amount of virus to increase, make the infection more difficult to treat (resistant), or worsen side effects.

**Warnings** Zidovudine has caused severe blood problems including a decrease in red blood cells (anemia) and white blood cells (neutropenia). They occur more often in people with advanced HIV disease (AIDS). Blood problems may require blood transfusions or stopping your medication. Your doctor will order blood tests to monitor for this. Keep all medical appointments. Get medical help right away if you develop signs of anemia (unusual tiredness, breathing problems, weakness, bluish fingernails/lips, pale skin, fast heartbeat). Low white blood cells can make you more likely to get serious (sometimes fatal) infections. Get medical help right away if you develop signs of infection such as cough that doesn't go away, fever, chills, breathing problems, or sore throat. This medication may also cause muscle problems (myopathy). Get medical help right away if you develop symptoms of myopathy (such as wasting or decrease in muscle size, muscle weakness/pain/tenderness, weight loss). Rarely, zidovudine has caused severe (sometimes fatal) liver problems and a certain metabolic problem (lactic acidosis). Get medical help right away if you develop symptoms of liver problems (such as nausea that doesn't go away, stomach/abdominal pain, dark urine, yellowing eyes/skin) or lactic acidosis (such as rapid breathing, drowsiness, muscle aches). These serious side effects may occur more often in women and obese patients.

**Interactions** Drug interactions may change how your medications work or increase your risk for serious side effects. This document does not contain all possible drug interactions. Keep a list of all the products you use (including prescription/nonprescription drugs and herbal products) and share it with your doctor and pharmacist. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicines without your doctor's approval. Some products that may interact with this drug include: orlistat, probenecid, ribavirin, stavudine, drugs that may suppress bone marrow function (such as ganciclovir, dapsone, trimethoprim, chemotherapy including doxorubicin, vincristine). Other medications can affect the removal of zidovudine from your body, which may affect how zidovudine works. Examples include methadone, rifampin, drugs used to treat seizures (such as phenytoin, valproic acid), among others. This medication must not be taken with other medications that contain zidovudine. Check the labels on all your other prescription medications to make sure they do not contain zidovudine. If you have any questions, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

**Precautions** Before taking zidovudine, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. This product may contain inactive ingredients, which can cause allergic reactions or other problems. Talk to your pharmacist for more details. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney problems, liver problems (such as hepatitis B or C, cirrhosis), alcohol use, low red/white blood cells. Liquid products may contain sugar. Caution is advised if you have diabetes or any other condition that requires you to limit sugar in your diet. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about using this product safely. Before having surgery, tell your doctors or dentist about all the products you use (including prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs, and herbal products). Tell your doctor if you are pregnant before using this medication. Treatment can lower the

risk of passing HIV infection to your baby. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. This medication passes into breast milk. Because breast milk can transmit HIV, do not breast-feed. Overdose If someone has overdosed and has serious symptoms such as passing out or trouble breathing, call 911. Otherwise, call a poison control center right away. US residents can call their local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. Canada residents can call a provincial poison control center. Symptoms of overdose may include extreme drowsiness/tiredness, confusion, seizures. Do not share this medication with others. Lab and/or medical tests (such as blood counts, liver tests, viral load, T-cell counts) should be done while you are taking this medication. Keep all medical and lab appointments. Consult your doctor for more details. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose. Take your next dose at the regular time. Do not double the dose to catch up. Store at room temperature away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medications away from children and pets. Do not flush medications down the toilet or pour them into a drain unless instructed to do so. Properly discard this product when it is expired or no longer needed. Consult your pharmacist or local waste disposal company.

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## Side Effects

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## Uses

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## Interactions

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## Other Details

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