

# iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

## Viramune

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- **Indications:**
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- **Storage:**
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- **Drug Status:**

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## Description

**Side Effects** Tiredness, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea may occur. Drowsiness may rarely occur. If any of these effects last or get worse, tell 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). Nevirapine can commonly cause a rash that is usually not serious. However, you may not be able to tell it apart from a rare rash that could be a sign of a severe reaction. Get medical help right away if you develop any rash. Changes in body fat may occur while you are taking this medication (such as increased fat in the upper back and stomach areas, decreased fat in the arms and legs). The cause and long-term effects of these changes are unknown. Discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with your doctor, as well as the possible use of exercise to reduce this side effect. A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare, but get medical help right away if it occurs. See the Warning section for more details. 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. How long does it take for this medicine to take effect? Nevirapine's antiviral effects can begin soon after administration, with plasma concentrations reaching peak levels approximately 4 hours post-dose. However, the clinical impact on viral load and CD4+ cell counts may take several weeks to become evident. Initial improvements in viral load can be observed within the first 2 to 4 weeks of therapy. How long do the effects of this medicine last? The half-life of nevirapine, once

steady state is achieved, is approximately 25 to 30 hours, supporting once-daily or twice-daily dosing depending on the formulation and phase of treatment. The antiretroviral effects of nevirapine are sustained with continuous administration as part of an antiretroviral therapy regimen. Is it safe to consume alcohol while taking this medicine? There is no direct interaction between nevirapine and alcohol; however, alcohol consumption can exacerbate nevirapine's potential side effects on the liver. Both nevirapine and alcohol can induce hepatotoxicity, and consuming alcohol during nevirapine therapy may increase the risk of liver damage. Therefore, patients are advised to limit or avoid alcohol while taking nevirapine. Is this a habit forming medicine? Nevirapine does not possess addictive properties and is not considered habit-forming. It is used for its pharmacological action against HIV-1 and does not produce euphoria or any psychoactive effects that could lead to dependence. Can this medicine be taken during pregnancy? Nevirapine is classified as FDA Pregnancy Category B. Clinical data suggest that nevirapine, as part of a combination antiretroviral regimen, can be used during pregnancy and is associated with a reduction in the risk of HIV-1 transmission from mother to child. However, nevirapine can cause serious hepatotoxicity, and its use in pregnant women requires careful consideration and monitoring. Can this medicine be taken while breast-feeding? Nevirapine is excreted in human breast milk. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that mothers with HIV not breastfeed to prevent postnatal transmission of HIV to a newborn child. In settings where breastfeeding may be considered due to lack of alternatives, the benefits and risks of nevirapine use during breastfeeding should be carefully evaluated. 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. Nevirapine belongs to a class of drugs known as non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs). Nevirapine 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. Nevirapine should not be used to prevent HIV infection after accidental exposure (such as needle sticks, blood/bodily fluid contact). Different HIV medications are used to prevent infection after exposure. How to use Viramune Read the Medication Guide and, if available, the Patient Information Leaflet provided by your pharmacist before you start using nevirapine and each time you get a refill. If you have any questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Take this medication by mouth with or without food as directed by your doctor, usually once daily for the first 14 days when you start treatment, and then twice daily. If liver problems or skin/allergic reactions occur while you are taking this medication once daily, get medical help right away and do not increase the dose to twice daily. If you are using the liquid suspension form of this medication, shake the bottle gently before each dose. Carefully measure the dose using a special measuring device/spoon. Do not use a household spoon because you may not get the correct dose. If you are using a dosing cup, rinse the cup with water after taking the medication and drink all of the rinse water to make sure you take the full dose. The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to treatment. In children, the dosage is also based on body size. Do not stay on the once-daily dosing schedule for more than 28 days. If you approach that period of time, your doctor should consider switching you to another medication. Consult your doctor for more details. If you stop taking this medication for more than 7 days for reasons other than the serious reactions described in the Warning section, ask your doctor for directions on how to restart treatment. You may need to take this medication once daily again for the first 14 days to decrease the risk of serious side effects. It is very important to continue taking this medication (and other HIV medications) exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not skip any doses. Do not increase your dose, take this drug more often 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. For the best effect, take this medication at evenly spaced times. To help you remember, take this medication at the same times every day. Warnings Rarely, nevirapine has caused severe (sometimes fatal) liver problems. Get medical help right away if you develop symptoms of liver problems such as nausea that doesn't go away, loss of appetite, vomiting, stomach/abdominal pain, dark urine, pale stools, yellowing eyes/skin, unusual tiredness, rash. Rarely, nevirapine has also caused serious (sometimes fatal) skin/allergic reactions. Get medical help right

away if you have any signs of skin/allergic reactions, including sore throat that doesn't go away, rash, itching/swelling/redness (especially of the eyes/face), blisters, fever, unusual tiredness, mouth sores, severe dizziness, trouble breathing, signs of kidney problems (such as change in the amount of urine), muscle pain/tenderness/weakness, joint pain. Women are at increased risk for developing these severe reactions. To help decrease the risk of skin/allergic reactions in all patients, nevirapine is started at a lower dose for the first 14 days. Also, people with higher T-cell counts at the start of nevirapine treatment are at greater risk for liver problems. Nevirapine is usually only started if the T-cell count is fewer than 250 in women or fewer than 400 in men. Keep all medical and lab appointments so your doctor can monitor how you are responding to nevirapine. The risk of these serious side effects is high in the first 18 weeks and highest during the first 6 weeks of nevirapine treatment. However, these side effects may occur at any time while taking this medication. If you have stopped taking nevirapine because of liver problems or skin/allergic reactions, you must never take any form of nevirapine again. Tell all of your doctors and pharmacists if you have ever stopped taking nevirapine because of these types of reactions. 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, rifabutin, warfarin. Other medications can affect the removal of nevirapine from your body, which may affect how nevirapine works. Examples include rifamycins (such as rifampin), St. John's wort, among others. Nevirapine can speed up the removal of many other medications from your body, which may affect how they work. Examples of affected drugs include antiarrhythmics (such as amiodarone), asunaprevir, atazanavir, cobicistat, elvitegravir, some drugs used to treat seizures (such as clonazepam), azole antifungals (such as itraconazole, ketoconazole), macrolide antibiotics (such as clarithromycin), methadone, among others. Do not use prednisone to prevent a rash because it can actually increase the risk of a rash during the first 6 weeks of nevirapine treatment. Ask your doctor for more details. This medication may decrease the effectiveness of hormonal birth control such as pills, patch, or ring. This could cause pregnancy. Talk to your doctor about additional or alternative reliable forms of birth control, and use an effective barrier method (latex or polyurethane condoms/dental dams) during sexual activity to decrease the risk of spreading HIV to others. Tell your doctor if you have any new spotting or breakthrough bleeding, because these may be signs that your hormonal birth control is not working well. Precautions Before taking nevirapine, 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: liver problems (such as hepatitis B or C, cirrhosis), kidney dialysis, lactose or galactose intolerance. This drug may rarely make you drowsy. Alcohol or marijuana (cannabis) can make you more drowsy. Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that needs alertness until you can do it safely. Limit alcoholic beverages. Talk to your doctor if you are using marijuana (cannabis). Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist about all the products you use (including prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs, and herbal products). During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed. Treatment can lower the risk of passing HIV infection to your baby, and nevirapine may be part of that treatment. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. Nevirapine 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. Do not share this medication with others. Lab and/or medical tests (such as liver function, 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

## Uses

## Interactions

## Other Details