

RITONAVIR (Norvir®)

What is Ritonavir used for?

Ritonavir is an antiretroviral agent that makes viruses less infectious. It is used to decrease the amount of viruses (viral load) to as low as possible, for as long as possible.

When should I take the medication?

Ritonavir is usually taken twice daily. It is usually given in combination with at least two other antiretroviral agents, to achieve significant decrease in viral multiplication.

How should it be taken?

Ritonavir should be taken with food. Syrup preparation is very bitter and the taste can be masked by:

- Mixing with chocolate milk, pudding or ice-cream just prior to administration.
- Asking your child to chew ice, or giving ice-cream or partially frozen orange juice prior to administration.
- Coating your child's mouth with peanut butter to prevent direct contact of the medication with the tongue.
- Giving your child strong-tasting foods immediately after the dose.

If your child is taking Ritonavir together with Didanosine, give them at least two hours apart from each other.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Missing doses makes Ritonavir less effective and may also make the virus resistant to Ritonavir and other possible antiretroviral agents.

If you forgot to give your child the medication within 4 hours, give the dose as soon as you remember and then continue to give it as per normal. Otherwise, skip the missed dose and give the next dose at the usual time. Do not double or increase the dose.

If your child vomits within 15 minutes of administration, give another dose if possible.

What side effects can this medicine cause? What can I do about them?

Nausea and vomiting are common, and may be prevented by eating small frequent meals or sucking on candy. Headaches and pain can be alleviated with mild painkillers. Other common side effects are diarrhoea, and weakness.

Inform your doctor if the side effects become severe and bothersome. Report to doctor immediately when your child complains of swelling, or numbness of the tongue, mouth, and lips.

Special instructions:

Some medication may reduce its efficacy, or increase its toxicity. Do not give your child any other medications or herbal products without first consulting your doctor.

Storage:

Syrup preparation must be kept refrigerated (<25°C) and stored in original container, away from direct light.

Capsules are to be refrigerated (2°C-8°C) and protected from light.