

# ENFUVRTIDE

**Other NAMES:** T-20, Fuzeon®

## WHY is this drug prescribed?

Enfuvirtide belongs to a new class of drugs called fusion inhibitors. Enfuvirtide is an antiretroviral (anti-HIV) drug that stops the HIV virus from entering CD4 cells.

Enfuvirtide is used together with other antiretrovirals to delay the progression of HIV infection. By doing this, your immune system should improve (increase in CD4<sup>+</sup> count) and you will be better protected against infections.

Enfuvirtide does not cure AIDS or completely kill the HIV virus, but helps to prevent further damage by slowing down the production of new viruses. Treatment with enfuvirtide does not reduce the risk of passing infection on to others. You will still be able to pass HIV by sexual contact, by blood transfer or by sharing needles. You should always use appropriate precautions to prevent passing HIV on to others.

## HOW should this drug be taken?

Generally, the dose is 90 mg (1.0 mL) injected twice daily underneath the skin (ideally every 12 hours).

Your dosage is:

\_\_\_\_ mL (\_\_\_\_mg) \_\_\_\_times a day

## HOW should this drug be prepared?

The drug is supplied as a 108 mg vial. The powder in each vial has to be mixed with the supplied sterile water for injection. The instructions for mixing and injection are as follows:

- Assemble supplies on a clean surface

- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Clean the tops of all vials with an alcohol swab
- Draw up 1.1 mL of sterile water using the safety syringe and needle
- Slowly inject sterile water into the enfuvirtide vial, letting water flow down the side of the vial
- Discard the needle in a biohazard container
- Mix the enfuvirtide powder with the water by rolling or tapping the vial (Do NOT shake); it takes up to 20 minutes for the powder to dissolve
- Draw up enfuvirtide for your injection into a new safety syringe and needle
- Choose a place on your body for injection (do NOT select the same site as your last injection), then give yourself the injection. The injection must be given **underneath the skin**, not in the muscle and not in a blood vessel.
- Throw away your used supplies (needles in the biohazard container). DO NOT REUSE NEEDLES OR SYRINGES.

## What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of enfuvirtide, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

## Why should you not forget to take this drug?

If you miss doses of enfuvirtide, the amount of HIV virus in your blood (known as the viral load) will start increasing again and your immune system will be further damaged. Missing doses of enfuvirtide may make the virus resistant to enfuvirtide; that is, enfuvirtide may stop being active and other drugs that work in a similar way as enfuvirtide may also become inactive. **Therefore, missing doses of enfuvirtide can decrease treatment options for the future.** Even if you do not feel well, you should always take your doses of enfuvirtide. Please do not

stop enfuvirtide without talking to your doctor first.

## What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

The most common adverse effect of enfuvirtide is reactions at the injection site. The skin reaction is generally 2 cm (3/4 inch) in diameter and can be sore, red, itchy, painful or cause a burning sensation. Bruises can also appear. These reactions improve over the first few days. However, it may take up to 3 weeks to completely disappear. In most cases, the drug can be continued. If you have a severely painful discomforting reaction, you should discuss this with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Other adverse effects that may be associated with the use of enfuvirtide include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, difficulties sleeping, headaches, a racing heart beat, skin redness or discoloration, abdominal pain, weakness, and fever. Rare serious reactions, such as pneumonia have been reported, and resulted in people being hospitalized.

**It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.**

## What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

You must make sure that you are taking the right dose. If you take higher doses of enfuvirtide than what is prescribed, you may increase the chance of having adverse effects. If you take lower doses of enfuvirtide than what is prescribed, the HIV virus may become resistant to enfuvirtide.

Enfuvirtide does not appear to be at a high risk of interacting with other drugs. The use of some drugs, however, are NOT permitted or are discouraged when taking enfuvirtide.

These include:

- Interleukin-2, interferons, Ampligen, HIV vaccine, adefovir (Preveon®), MKC-442, St.John's Wort, hydroxyurea

Inform your doctor and pharmacist of all prescribed and non-prescribed drugs you are taking. As well, you should inform them of natural products you are taking. If you wish to start a new drug or natural product, please consult with your pharmacist before doing so.

The safety of enfuvirtide has not been established during pregnancy. Please discuss this with your doctor if you are pregnant. Your doctor can recommend the appropriate treatment to help to reduce the risk of passing the HIV virus on to your baby. Breastfeeding is NOT recommended if you have HIV as you can transmit the virus to your baby through your breast milk.

#### **How should this drug be STORED?**

ENFUVIRTIDE should be stored at room temperature (4 -20°C), out of the reach of children. Ensure that the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date ("EXP") shown on the outside of the package.

Once the powder has been mixed with the sterile water for injection, the solution is stable for 24 hours when kept in the refrigerator.

**If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.**

**Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.**

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

**Pharmacist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Product monograph Fuzeon® (enfuvirtide).  
Mississauga, ON, Canada: Hoffmann La Roche,  
Ltd 2007. Prepared by the Ontario HIV  
Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2005.  
Reviewed 2009.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates  
may be found at: [www.hivclinic.ca](http://www.hivclinic.ca)

***ENFUVIRTIDE***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***