

## TENOFOVIR/ EMTRICITABINE

**Other NAMES:** Truvada® (combination of tenofovir 300 mg and emtricitabine 200 mg in each tablet).

### WHY is this drug prescribed?

This tablet contains tenofovir and emtricitabine, two antiretroviral (anti-HIV) reverse transcriptase inhibitors (“nukes”). It is given 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.

Tenofovir and emtricitabine do 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 tenofovir and emtricitabine 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 1 tablet once a day, with or without food.

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

If you miss a dose, 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 this drug, 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. A few missed doses can be enough for the two components, tenofovir and emtricitabine, to stop being active, a phenomenon known as **resistance**. When this happens, other antiretrovirals that work in a similar way as tenofovir and emtricitabine may also become inactive. **Therefore, missing doses of this drug can decrease treatment options for the future.** Please do not stop this drug without talking to your doctor first.

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

Most adverse effects reported with tenofovir and emtricitabine are mild, and may include dizziness, diarrhea,

nausea, vomiting, headache, rash and intestinal gas. Skin discolouration (small spots or freckles) may also happen. If these effects occur and are bothersome, please discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

Rare adverse effects that have been observed are increases in liver and muscle enzymes, as well as minor kidney damage. Blood tests must be done regularly to look for these adverse effects.

The long-term effects of tenofovir and emtricitabine are unknown at this time. As more people use these drugs for longer periods of time, other adverse effects may occur.

**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 than what is prescribed, you may increase the chance of having side effects. If you take lower doses of than what is prescribed, the HIV virus may become resistant to tenofovir and emtricitabine.

Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of tenofovir and emtricitabine. Also, tenofovir might influence the effect of other drugs you are taking, such as didanosine (Videx EC®) or atazanavir (Reyataz®). In such cases, some of your drug doses may need to be adjusted.

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.

Please inform 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?**

Truvada tablets should be stored in a cool (15-30°C) dry place, protected from light and well 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.

Do not store in your bathroom or kitchen, as heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

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

Reference: Product Monograph Truvada™ (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine). Gilead Canada Inc, Mississauga, ON, 2009. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, updated 2009.

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

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***(TRUVADA®)***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***