

# INDINAVIR

**Other NAMES:** Crixivan®

## WHY is this drug prescribed?

Indinavir is an antiretroviral (anti-HIV) drug that belongs to a class of drugs called **protease inhibitors**. Protease inhibitors interfere with a different step in virus reproduction than other classes of drugs previously available to fight HIV.

Indinavir 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.

Indinavir 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 indinavir 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?

Indinavir is available as 200 mg and 400 mg white capsules. The recommended dose of indinavir is 800mg every 8 hours. This dose may need to be adjusted if you are taking other protease inhibitors or if you have liver problems.

**It should be taken on an empty stomach, that is 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal.** If nausea is a problem, it can be taken with a light snack low in fat and protein (dry toast with jelly, corn flakes with skim milk and sugar). If you are also taking ritonavir (Norvir Sec®), indinavir can be taken with a meal.

Your dosage is:

200 mg capsule  
400 mg capsule

\_\_\_\_ capsules (\_\_\_\_mg) every \_\_\_\_ hours

It is important to drink at least 1.5 litres of liquid each day to ensure adequate hydration. If you exercise, have a fever, take ritonavir (Norvir Sec®) or if it is extremely hot, you should drink 2.0 to 2.5 litres of liquid each day. This may decrease the chance of developing kidney stones. Accepted liquids include water, tea, coffee, and skim milk. The necessary amount of liquid should not be drunk all at the same time, but rather spread out though the day.

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

If you miss a dose of indinavir, 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 indinavir, 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 indinavir to stop being active. A phenomenon known as **resistance**. When this happens, other antiretrovirals that work in a similar way as indinavir may also become inactive. **Therefore, missing doses of indinavir can decrease treatment options for the future.** Even if you do not feel well, you should always take your doses of indinavir. Please do not stop indinavir without talking to your doctor first.

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

The most commonly reported adverse effects

include: kidney stones associated with back pain with or without blood in the urine, weakness, fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, dizziness, headache, dry skin, rash, and taste changes. If these effects occur and are bothersome, please call the clinic or discuss them at your next visit.

Regular blood tests will be done to detect any changes in your cholesterol, triglyceride, bilirubin, and blood sugar level. Increases in these values and increases in blood pressure have occasionally been seen.

The long-term effects of indinavir are unknown at this time. Further studies are being carried out. Abnormal weight gain or changes in body shape have been reported, but it is uncertain if indinavir is responsible for these changes.

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

Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of indinavir. Also, indinavir might influence the effect of other drugs you are taking. 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.

**Do NOT take the following medications with indinavir:**

- Alprazolam (Xanax®)
- Amiodarone (Cordarone®)
- Ergot derivatives [Ergotamine (Cafergot®, Bellergal®, Ergodryl™, Gravergol®), ergonovine, dihydroergotamine (Migranal®), methylergonovine (Methergine®)]
- Oral Midazolam (Versed®)
- Pimozide (Orap®)
- Triazolam (Halcion®)

Indinavir should be administered at least 1 hour apart from antacids (Maalox®, Tums®, etc.)

The safety of indinavir has not been established during pregnancy. Please inform your doctor if you are pregnant. Your doctor can recommend the appropriate treatment to help 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?**

Indinavir capsules are sensitive to moisture. Indinavir capsules should be stored in a cool (15 - 30°C) dry place, in a tightly closed container, protected from light and moisture. Keep 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:** \_\_\_\_\_

***INDINAVIR***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***

Reference: Product monograph Crixivan® (indinavir sulfate). Kirkland, Qc, Canada: Merck Frosst Canada & Co, 2009. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003. Updated 2009.

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