

VORICONAZOLE

Other NAMES: Vfend®

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Voriconazole is an antifungal drug. It is used to treat a variety of fungal infections (candida, aspergillosis) in the mouth (like thrush), esophagus, lungs, blood and in other areas.

HOW should this drug be taken?

Voriconazole is available as 50 mg and 200 mg tablets. During the first days of therapy, it can also be given by intravenous (I.V.: in the veins) injections. The intravenous injections will be given over a 1 to 2 hour period, likely by a nurse at the clinic.

The dose of voriconazole will depend on your weight and on the other drugs you are taking. The usual oral dosage is 200 mg twice daily. This dose may need to be adjusted by your doctor to meet your needs.

Voriconazole tablets should be taken on an empty stomach. Take your dose at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal.

Your dosage is:

50 mg tablet

200 mg tablet

____ tablets (____ mg) ____ time(s) a day

or

intravenous infusion

____ mL (____ mg) ____ time(s) a day

Take voriconazole for the duration of time it is prescribed. If you stop it earlier, your infection

may come back. If the infection worsens or persists, consult your doctor.

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose voriconazole, 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.

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

Voriconazole may cause some **stomach upset, nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite**. Some other potential adverse effects are **abdominal pain, diarrhea, and headache**. If these effects occur, please inform your doctor or pharmacist.

Voriconazole can **increase liver enzymes**. This usually does not give any symptoms. Rarely, **hepatitis** (an inflammation of the liver) can occur. Signs of this are yellowing of the eyes and skin, fever, severe nausea and / or vomiting, dark urine, pale stools, fatigue, and abdominal pain. Consult a doctor immediately if you experience these symptoms. Your doctor will do regular blood tests to verify your liver function.

Rarely, some people can develop an **allergic reaction** to voriconazole. If you are allergic to the drug, you can develop a **skin rash, hives, itching, swelling or tingling feeling in the mouth and throat, chest pain and tightness, and difficulties breathing**. Please consult a doctor immediately if these symptoms appear.

Changes in vision can also occur if you are receiving voriconazole. These include changes in colour vision and a blurred vision. These symptoms are usually mild and temporary. If you notice vision changes, you

should avoid driving, using machinery or doing something that may be dangerous if your vision is impaired. Notify your doctor if your vision changes or if bright lights are bothersome.

What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

Before starting voriconazole, please inform your doctor if you have ever developed an allergy to voriconazole or to similar drugs [ketoconazole (Nizoral®), fluconazole (Diflucan®), itraconazole (Sporanox®)]. Also notify your doctor if you have kidney, liver or vision problems.

Certain drugs can increase or decrease the effect of voriconazole. Also, voriconazole 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.

You should NOT take the following drugs if your doctor has prescribed voriconazole:

- Carbamazepine (Tegretol®)
- Efavirenz (Sustiva®) standard dose
- Ergot derivatives [Ergotamine (Cafergot®, Bellergal®, Ergodyl™, Gravergol®), ergo-novine, dihydroergotamine (Migranal®), methylergonovine (Methergine®)]
- Phenobarbital
- Pimozide (Orap®)
- Quinidine (Biquin Durules®)
- Rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
- Rifampin (e.g. Rifadin®, Rimactane®, Rofact®)
- Ritonavir (Norvir®) at doses of 400 mg twice daily or higher

- Sirolimus (Rapamune®)
- St. John's Wort

Voriconazole can make your skin more sensitive to the sun or sunlamps. Therefore, wear protective clothing and use a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15 whenever you are exposed to the sun. You should also avoid sunlamps. Ask your pharmacist to help select a sunscreen that protects against drug-sun reactions.

The safety of voriconazole during pregnancy or breastfeeding has not established. You should avoid becoming pregnant by using appropriate contraceptive methods while you are receiving voriconazole. Breastfeeding is NOT recommended if you are receiving voriconazole. Please discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist if this is a concern.

How should this drug be STORED?

Voriconazole should be stored at room temperature in a cool (15-30°C) dry place, protected from light and well out of the reach of children. The diluted voriconazole solution for intravenous administration should be kept in the refrigerator between 2 to 8° C and used within 24 hours.

If you are receiving the intravenous solution at home, about an hour before your treatment, remove a bag from the refrigerator and let it warm to room temperature. Check your bag to ensure that there are no leaks and that there are no solid particles in the solution. If so, you should not use the bag.

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 near the stove, 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: Voriconazole (Vfend®) Product Monograph. Pfizer Canada Inc., Kirkland, QC, 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

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MEDICATION

FACT SHEET