

# cabotegravir 200 mg/mL + rilpivirine 300 mg/mL long-acting injectable suspension (Cabenuva® Kit)

available in 2x2 mL and 2x3 mL Kits

## What is Cabenuva®?

The Cabenuva® kit contains a long acting injection form of two different antiretroviral (“ARV”) medicines: cabotegravir and rilpivirine. These medicines are used to lower the amount of HIV virus in your body and make your immune system stronger. The goal of HIV treatment is to have an “undetectable” viral load.

## How do I use Cabenuva®?

When switching from oral HIV medicines (“pills”) to Cabenuva® injections, take your last dose of medicine by mouth on the SAME day as your first injections.

Injections must be given by a healthcare professional.

- You will receive one injection each of cabotegravir and rilpivirine, given on the same day. Injections are usually given in the buttocks, one injection on each side.

Discuss your injection schedule, and how to book appointments (injection visits) with your healthcare provider.

- After the first “loading dose” injections, ongoing injections are given either every 4 weeks (2 mL doses) or every 8 weeks (3 mL doses).
- To avoid late doses, contact your healthcare provider at least two weeks in advance of your next dose to schedule your next injection appointment.
- Your healthcare provider will order your Cabenuva® supply from the St Paul’s Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy, and your medicine will be sent directly to your healthcare clinic.

- If you need to change your injection schedule (e.g. for travel), discuss with your healthcare provider as soon as possible. It may be possible to re-schedule your injection visit a few days before or after your usual dosing time. For longer delays, a planned switch to oral medicine may be needed.

It is very important to take Cabenuva® injections at the recommended schedule, to make sure the medicine keeps working. If your injection doses are not taken on time, there is a chance that the virus will change into a form that is harder to treat. This is called “drug resistance”.

### **If you miss an injection visit, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible.**

- It may be possible to re-schedule the injection visit (if less than 7 days late).
- If the time between injections is too long, you may need to take HIV medicines by mouth to control the virus, and may need blood tests before re-starting the injections.

If you stop taking HIV medicine the amount of HIV virus in your blood will increase.

### **Do not stop taking Cabenuva® without talking to your healthcare provider.**

Small amounts of cabotegravir and rilpivirine will stay in your body for about 12 months after stopping Cabenuva® injections. This is NOT enough medicine to control the HIV virus, but could result in drug resistance.

**If you stop taking Cabenuva® injections, it is important to switch to, and keep taking, other HIV medicines to control the virus.**



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cabotegravir + rilpivirine INJECTION



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## What should I expect?

Cabotegravir and rilpivirine injections are usually well tolerated. Side effects may include:

Short-term effects after the injection:

- injection site pain, swelling or itching
- muscle pain, chills and/or feeling hot

Other side effects may include:

- nausea, vomiting
- diarrhea
- dizziness
- feeling tired
- trouble sleeping
- abnormal dreams
- headache
- weight gain

Rare, serious side effects may include:

- Allergic reaction: Signs include rash, blisters on skin or mouth, swelling of the face or throat, difficulty breathing, fever, flu-like symptoms.
- Changes in heart beat: Signs include dizziness, fast heart beats, fainting or seizures.
- Mood changes, feeling sad or depressed
- Liver problems: Signs include yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, pale stools or pain on right side below ribs.

**Always tell your healthcare provider if side effects are bothering you. IMMEDIATELY contact your healthcare provider if you have any serious side effects.**

It is important to have regular blood tests to watch for side effects and make sure your HIV medicine is working to control the virus. Talk to your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, thinking about becoming pregnant, or if you plan to breastfeed.

## Can I take other medicines?

Some medicines may interact with cabotegravir and rilpivirine injections. Drug interactions can stop your treatment from working, or may cause unwanted side effects. Always tell your pharmacist and

other healthcare providers if you are using any prescription or non-prescription medicines, vitamins, supplements, natural medicines, or recreational drugs.

Medicines that may interact with cabotegravir or rilpivirine injections include:

- Some medicines to treat seizures, such as phenytoin (Dilantin®), carbamazepine, or oxcarbazepine.
- Some antibiotics such as rifampin, rifabutin or clarithromycin.
- Some antifungal medicines such as ketoconazole.
- Dexamethasone
- St John's Wort

This is not a complete list of medicines that interact with cabotegravir and rilpivirine.

Always check with your pharmacist before starting any new medicines to make sure they are safe for you.

## What if I have questions?

If you have questions or problems with your medicine, call the St. Paul's Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy:

**1-888-511-6222**

(Monday to Friday daytime and urgent issues after hours)

To book an appointment to speak with a St. Paul's Hospital pharmacist, call reception:

**604-806-8060**

(Monday to Friday daytime)

This pamphlet is for general information purposes only. It does not provide individual medical or treatment advice and is not a substitute for medical or professional care.

Prepared by St Paul's Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy  
Vancouver, BC



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