

# raltegravir (Isentress<sup>®</sup>, Isentress HD<sup>®</sup>)

400 mg – pink, oval tablet



600 mg HD – yellow, oval tablet



Also available as a pediatric tablet

## What is raltegravir?

Raltegravir is a medicine used to lower the amount of HIV virus in your body and make your immune system stronger. Raltegravir is always used with other HIV medicines.

## How do I take it?

- Take raltegravir as directed on the prescription label:
- Take at the same time every day, with or without food
- Do NOT take antacids containing aluminum or magnesium if you are taking raltegravir
- Do NOT take calcium if you are taking raltegravir HD 600 mg tablets (see section *Can I take raltegravir with other medicines?*)

Store in a dry place at room temperature, and keep out of reach of children

## What if I forget to take it?

It is very important to take raltegravir every day to make sure that it keeps working. If you miss a dose, there is a higher chance that the virus will change to a form that is harder to treat. This is called "resistance".

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take 2 doses at the same

time. If you are not sure if you should take your dose, call the pharmacist.

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

**Do not stop any of your HIV medicines without talking to your doctor.**

## What should I expect?

Raltegravir is usually well tolerated.

Side effects may include:

- nausea
- headache
- dizziness
- tiredness
- trouble sleeping

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
- Liver problems: Signs include yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, pale stools, or pain on right side below ribs
- Mood changes, feeling sad or depressed
- A condition called rhabdomyolysis: Signs include muscle pain, dark or tea-colored urine or loss of appetite

**Always tell your doctor or pharmacist if side effects are bothering you.**

**IMMEDIATELY contact your doctor if you have any serious side effects**



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in HIV/AIDS



How you want to be treated.



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 doctor if you are pregnant, thinking about becoming pregnant, or if you plan to breastfeed.

## Can I take raltegravir with other medicines?

Some medicines may interact with raltegravir. Drug interactions can stop your treatment from working or may cause unwanted side effects.

Always tell your pharmacist and doctor if you are using any prescription or non-prescription medicines, vitamins, supplements, natural medicines or recreational drugs.

Medicines that may interact with raltegravir include:

### Important information about antacids and calcium supplements:

- Antacids containing magnesium or aluminum (e.g. Maalox<sup>®</sup>, Gaviscon<sup>®</sup>) should NOT be used with raltegravir, at any time
- Antacids and medicines containing calcium carbonate (e.g. Tums<sup>®</sup>):
  - May be used with raltegravir **400 mg** tablets
  - Should NOT be used with raltegravir **600 mg HD** tablets, at any time
- Iron supplements may be taken at least 3 hours before or 3 hours after raltegravir
- Antibiotics such as rifampin

This is not a complete list of medicines that interact with raltegravir.

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 St. Paul's Hospital Ambulatory Pharmacy:

**1-888-511-6222**

(Monday to Friday daytime and urgent issues after hours)

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

**604-806-8060**

(Monday to Friday daytime)

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