

## ADEFOVIR

**Other NAMES:** Hepsera™

### **WHY is this drug prescribed?**

Adefovir is an antiviral drug that is part of the nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor family. It is used to treat hepatitis B infection (a type of liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus). It acts by decreasing hepatitis B virus replication. This then decreases damage to the liver.

Adefovir was previously used at much higher doses to manage HIV. It is no longer suggested for the treatment of HIV as the high doses necessary can be toxic to the kidneys.

### **HOW should this drug be taken?**

For the treatment of hepatitis B, the usual dose is 10 mg (1 tablet) once a day. The dosage may need to be adjusted if you have kidney problems. Adefovir can be taken with or without food.

Your dosage is:

10 mg tablet

\_\_\_\_ tablet (\_\_\_\_mg) once a day

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

If you miss a dose of adefovir, 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 adefovir, the amount of hepatitis B virus in your blood (known as the HBV viral load) will start increasing again and your liver can be further damaged. Missing doses can stop adefovir from being active. A phenomenon known as **resistance**. As much as possible, try to take all the doses of adefovir. Please do not stop adefovir without talking to your doctor first.

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

Most adverse effects reported with adefovir are mild and uncommon. These may include headache, fatigue, diarrhea, intestinal gas, nausea and vomiting. If these effects occur and are bothersome, please discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other adverse effects that have been observed are increases in liver enzymes and decreases in kidney function. Blood tests must be done regularly to look for these adverse effects.

Kidney failure has occurred with patients who have received very high doses of adefovir (ten times the dose that you will be receiving).

Rarely, some people can develop a skin rash and itchiness. Please consult with a doctor if this occurs.

**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?**

Before starting adefovir, please inform your doctor if you have kidney problems or if you are infected by HIV.

You must make sure that you are taking the right dose. If you take higher doses of adefovir than what is prescribed, you may increase the chance of having adverse effects. If you take lower doses of adefovir than what is prescribed, the hepatitis B virus may become resistant to adefovir.

As adefovir is eliminated by the kidneys, it is possible that it may interfere with other drugs that are also eliminated by the kidneys (eg. didanosine (Videx™), probenecid (Benuryl®)). 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.

The safety of adefovir during pregnancy or breastfeeding has not yet been established. Please discuss this with your doctor if this is a concern.

#### **How should this drug be STORED?**

Adefovir tablets should be stored in their original container 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:** \_\_\_\_\_

***ADEFOVIR***

***MEDICATION***

***FACT SHEET***

Reference: Drugdex drug evaluations Adefovir. Thompson Micromedex® Health Care Services, Vol 115, 2003. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003.

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