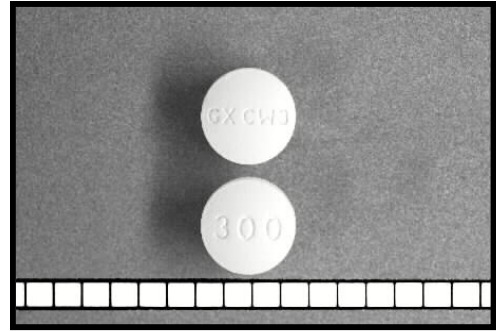


ZIDOVUDINE (RETROVIR, AZT)

USE:

Zidovudine is an antiretroviral drug in a class called Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTIs). It is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs to treat HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infections. This drug is not a cure for HIV. Zidovudine may also be used for other indications determined by your doctor.

AVAILABLE AS: 300 milligram (mg) tablets; 100mg capsules; Oral syrup as 50mg/5ml; Available in Combivir (300mg zidovudine and 150mg lamivudine) and Trizivir (300mg zidovudine, 150mg lamivudine, and 300mg abacavir)



HOW TO USE THIS MEDICATION:

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor. This medication is usually used in combination with other anti-HIV medications. Do not stop taking any of these medications on your own without first consulting a doctor. The normal adult dose for zidovudine is 300 milligrams by mouth twice daily. Dosing for children is based on body surface area and will be determined by your doctor. Your doctor may change this dose if you have kidney problems or are on other medications that affect zidovudine. Make sure you follow the blood testing schedule that your doctor will give you.

If you miss a dose of your medication, take it as soon as you remember unless it is close to your next dose. Do not take two doses at once. If you think you may have taken too much of your medication, contact your local poison control center or emergency room right away.

Zidovudine can be taken with or without food and should be taken with a full glass of water.

All forms of zidovudine should be stored at room temperature in a cool, dry place away from excessive heat, cold, light or moisture. Always keep medication out of the reach of children.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

Do not use zidovudine if you have had a prior allergic reaction to zidovudine (as Retrovir, Combivir, or Trizivir) or any of the components of these medications.

SIDE EFFECTS:

Side effects that may go away with time include mild nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or decreased appetite; headache; trouble sleeping; a mild rash; or muscle pain. You may also notice fingernail discoloration. Another minor side effect is redistribution of body fat. You may experience an increase in body fat around the neck, breast, trunk, and upper

back or a loss of fat from the arms, legs and face. Ask your doctor about ways to manage these side effects with diet, exercise, or medications.

Warning: Contact your doctor immediately if you experience any of the conditions listed below. Stop taking the medication and seek emergency help if you have an allergic reaction to zidovudine. This would include difficulty breathing, closing of the throat, hives, or swelling of the lips, tongue or face. Serious blood problems including anemia or neutropenia may happen while taking zidovudine. Signs that this may be occurring are unusual tiredness, pale skin, sore throat, fever or chills. Contact your doctor right away if you experience these symptoms. Your doctor will want you to have blood tests to monitor for this side effect. Muscle disorders called myopathy may be experienced with zidovudine. Symptoms of myopathy are muscle weakness, pain or soreness. Other side effects common to this class of drugs include conditions called pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), lactic acidosis, and liver problems. Call your doctor immediately if you experience nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea or unusual stomach discomfort or pain; weakness and tiredness; shortness of breath; or yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice). These are signs of the rare but severe conditions described above. Avoid alcohol which may increase the chances of having these side effects. Make sure your doctor knows if you are anemic or have kidney or liver problems.

Notify your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding. Zidovudine's effects on an unborn baby are still unclear. People with HIV should never breastfeed because of the risk of transmitting HIV to the infant.

This medication does not prevent the transmission of HIV to other people. Make sure you understand and practice safe sex and do not share needles with anyone.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:

Some medications may change the way zidovudine works in your body. Your doctor may need to avoid using them or alter your dose of zidovudine. Make sure your doctor knows if you are taking fluconazole (Diflucan), valproic acid (Depakene, Depakote), doxorubicin (Adriamycin), phenytoin (Dilantin), atovaquone (Mepron), methadone, nelfinavir (Viracept), probenecid (Benemid), rifampin, ritonavir (Norvir), ganciclovir (Cytovene), or cotrimoxazole (Bactrim, Septra).

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about any medications including over the counter, herbal, vitamin, and prescription products before using them with zidovudine.

References: see references 70-73