

VALTREX tablets

valaciclovir 500 mg

New Zealand Consumer Medicine Information

What is in this leaflet

Please read this leaflet carefully before you start using VALTREX tablets.

This leaflet answers some common questions about VALTREX tablets. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking VALTREX tablets against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

You may need to read it again.

What VALTREX tablets are used for

VALTREX tablets belong to a group of medicines called antivirals. It works by killing or stopping the growth of viruses called herpes simplex (HSV), varicella zoster (VZV) and cytomegalovirus (CMV).

VALTREX tablets can be used to:

- treat shingles (herpes zoster)
- treat HSV infections of the skin and genital herpes. It is also used to help prevent these infections from returning
- treat shingles affecting the eye region (ophthalmic zoster)
- prevent infection with CMV after organ transplants.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why this medicine has been prescribed for you.

Your doctor may have prescribed it for another reason.

This medicine is not addictive.

There is not enough information to recommend the use of this medicine for children.

Before you take VALTREX tablets

When you must not take it

Do not take VALTREX tablets if you have an allergy to:

- any medicine containing valaciclovir or aciclovir
- any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- rash, itching or hives on the skin.

Do not take this medicine if you are pregnant, trying to become pregnant or breastfeeding, unless your doctor says you should.

Your doctor will weigh up the benefit of you taking VALTREX tablets against the risk to your baby while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Do not give this medicine to children.

Safety and effectiveness in children have not been established.

Do not take this medicine after the expiry date printed on the pack or if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

If it has expired or is damaged, return it to your pharmacist for disposal.

If you are not sure whether you should start taking this medicine, talk to your doctor.

Before you start to take it

Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any other medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.

Tell your doctor if:

- you have kidney or liver problems.

Care should be taken to ensure adequate fluid intake in those who are at risk of dehydration, such as the elderly.

If you are taking VALTREX to treat or prevent genital herpes, or you have had genital herpes in the past, you should still practice safe sexual intercourse, including the use of condoms. This is important to prevent you passing the infection on to others. You should not have sex if you have genital sores or blisters.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant or are breast-feeding.

Your doctor can discuss with you the risks and benefits involved.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell him/her before you start taking VALTREX tablets.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you get without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Some medicines and VALTREX tablets may interfere with each other. These include:

- aminoglycosides
- organoplatinum compounds
- iodinated contrast media
- methotrexate
- pentamidine
- foscarnet
- ciclosporin
- tacrolimus.

These medicines may affect how well VALTREX tablets works.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking this medicine.

How to take VALTREX tablets

Follow all directions given to you by your doctor or pharmacist carefully.

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

If you do not understand the instructions on the box, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.

How much to take

Treatment of shingles (herpes zoster) including the eye (ophthalmic zoster):

Adults: The usual dose is 1000 mg (two 500 mg tablets) three times a day. VALTREX tablets should be taken for seven days.

Treatment of herpes simplex infections:

Adults: The usual dose is 500 mg twice a day.

Prevention (suppression) of recurrences of herpes simplex infections:

Adults: The usual dose is 500 mg once a day.

Some people with frequent recurrences may benefit from taking one 500 mg tablet once a day as a divided dose (250 mg twice a day).

For adults whose immune system is impaired or weakened, the dose is 500 mg twice a day.

Prevention of cytomegalovirus infection (CMV) and disease:

Adults and adolescents (from 12 years old): The usual dose is 2 g (four 500 mg tablets) four times a day. VALTREX tablets should be taken for 90 days.

Your doctor may adjust the dose of VALTREX tablets if:

- you are over 65 years of age
- you have kidney problems
- you have a weak immune system.

How to take it

Swallow the tablets whole with a glass of water.

You should drink plenty of fluids while taking VALTREX tablets, especially if you are elderly.

When to take it

Take your medicine at about the same time each day.

Taking it at the same time each day will have the best effect. It will also help you remember when to take it.

How long to take it

Continue taking your medicine for as long as your doctor tells you.

If you forget to take it

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose when you are meant to. Otherwise, take it as soon as you remember, then go

back to taking it as you would normally.

Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine, ask your pharmacist for some hints.

If you take too much (overdose)

Immediately telephone your doctor or the National Poisons Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766), or go to accident and emergency at your nearest hospital, if you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much VALTREX tablets.

Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

Symptoms of an overdose may include kidney failure, confusion, hallucination, agitation, decreased consciousness and coma, nausea and vomiting.

While you are taking VALTREX tablets

Things you must do

If you are about to be started on any new medicine, remind your doctor and pharmacist that you are taking VALTREX tablets.

Tell any other doctors, dentists, and pharmacists who treat you that you are taking this medicine.

If you become pregnant while taking this medicine, tell your doctor immediately.

Things you must not do

Do not take VALTREX tablets to treat any other complaints unless your doctor tells you to.

Do not give your medicine to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not stop taking your medicine or lower the dosage without checking with your doctor.

Things to be careful of

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how VALTREX tablets affects you.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking VALTREX tablets.

This medicine helps most people, but it may have unwanted side effects in a few people. All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical attention if you get some of the side effects.

Do not be alarmed by the following lists of side effects. You may not experience any of them.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Common side effects

These may affect up to 1 in 10 people:

- headache
- nausea.

Uncommon side effects

These may affect up to 1 in 100 people:

- difficulty breathing
- rashes
- sensitivity to UV light, such as development of a rash like sunburn even after short exposure to UV light.

If you think you are having an allergic reaction to VALTREX tablets, stop using this medicine and tell your doctor immediately or go the accident and emergency department at your nearest

hospital. Symptoms of an allergic reaction usually include some or all of the following:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing, coughing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- rash, itching, redness or hives on the skin
- suddenly feeling weak or light headed (may lead to collapse or loss of consciousness).

Rare side effects

These may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people:

- dizziness
- confusion
- hallucinations
- decreased consciousness
- abdominal pain
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- itching (pruritus)
- kidney failure.

Very rare side effects

These may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people:

- low white blood cell count
- low platelet count
- allergic reaction. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:
 - wheezing
 - swelling of the lips/mouth
 - difficulty breathing
 - hayfever
 - lumpy rash (hives)
 - fainting
- agitation
- tremor
- uncoordinated muscle movement (ataxia) and speech (dysarthria)
- psychotic episodes
- convulsions

- brain injury
- coma
- damage to the liver or kidneys, which gets better when VALTREX treatment is stopped
- swelling of the skin
- low back pain (kidney pain)

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some people.

After taking VALTREX tablets

Storage

Keep your tablets in the pack until it is time to take them.

Keep your tablets in a place where the temperature stays below 30°C.

Do not store VALTREX tablets or any other medicine in the bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave it on a window sill or in the car.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep it where children cannot reach it.

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Disposal

If your doctor tells you to stop taking VALTREX tablets or the expiry date has passed, ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicine that is left over.

Product description

What it looks like

VALTREX tablets 500 mg are white, biconvex, elongated, film coated

tablets with a white to off-white core.
The tablets are unscored and
engraved 'GX CF1' on one side.
They are available in a pack size of
30 tablets.

Ingredients

VALTREX tablets contain the active
ingredient valaciclovir. They also
contain:

- microcrystalline cellulose
- crospovidone
- povidone
- magnesium stearate
- colloidal silicon dioxide
- purified water
- carnauba wax
- hydroxypropylmethylcellulose
- titanium dioxide
- polyethylene glycol
- polysorbate 80.

Supplier

VALTREX tablets are supplied in
New Zealand by:

GlaxoSmithKline NZ Limited

Private Bag 106600

Downtown

Auckland

New Zealand

Ph: (09) 367 2900

Fax: (09) 367 2910

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