

# Palmetto State Pharmaceuticals

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## *Patient Drug Education*

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### **ACYCLOVIR 400 MG TABLET**

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#### **USES:**

This drug is used in certain patients to treat outbreaks of herpes simplex on the skin (mouth, lips, genitals, anus), outbreaks of shingles (herpes zoster), and chickenpox. The viruses that cause these infections are similar. They live in the body quietly until an outbreak is triggered. Acyclovir is not a cure for the infections, but treatment of an outbreak can speed up healing of the sores, decrease pain, and lower the risk of complications from the virus (e.g., whole body infection, brain infection, persistent pain after sore healing).

#### **HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICATION:**

**HOW TO USE:** Take this medication by mouth with or without food, usually 2-6 times daily or as directed by your doctor. It is very important to continue taking this medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Unless your doctor directs you otherwise, drink plenty of fluids while taking this medication. Dosage is based on your weight, kidney function, medical condition, and response to therapy. This medication works best when the amount of drug in your body is kept at a constant level. Therefore, take this drug at evenly spaced intervals. To help you remember, take it at the same times each day. Do not take more or less of this drug than prescribed or stop taking it even for a short time unless directed to do so by your doctor. Skipping or changing your dose without approval from your doctor may decrease the effectiveness of the drug.

#### **SIDE EFFECTS:**

Headache, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly. Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects. Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: mental/mood changes (anxiety, agitation, slowed thinking, confusion), hallucinations, dizziness, trouble speaking, sleepiness, tingling/numbness of hands or feet, vision changes. Tell your doctor immediately if any of these rare but very serious side effects occur: loss of consciousness, seizures, swollen glands (lymph nodes), decrease in urination, signs of infection (e.g., fever, persistent sore throat), easy bruising/bleeding, yellowing eyes/skin, dark urine, persistent nausea/vomiting, severe tiredness. A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of a serious allergic reaction may include: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

#### **PRECAUTIONS:**

Before taking acyclovir, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney problems, HIV infection, cancer, problems with the immune system. This drug may rarely make you dizzy or drowsy; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery. Limit alcoholic beverages. Kidney function declines as you grow older. This medication is removed by the kidneys. Therefore, caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to the effects of the drug, especially to the dizziness, confusion and sleepiness effects. This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. This medication passes into breast milk. This product may cause undesirable effects in a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

#### **DRUG INTERACTIONS:**

Your healthcare professionals (e.g., doctor or pharmacist) may already be aware of any possible drug interactions and may be monitoring you for it. Do not start, stop or change the dosage of any medicine before checking with them first. Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially of: probenecid. If you are currently using any of these medications listed above, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting acyclovir.

#### **NOTES:**

To reduce the risk of spreading herpes to others, stop all sexual activity during an outbreak until it is completely healed. Always use effective barrier protections (e.g., latex or polyurethane condoms, dental dams) during all sexual activity. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details. Do not share this medication with others. Keep all medical appointments.

#### **MISSED DOSE:**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it is within 2 hours of your next dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

#### **STORAGE:**

Store tablets/capsules/suspension at room temperature between 59-77 degrees F (15-25 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.