

For inquiries between 8am-10pm and for emergencies 24 hours call: 1-888-511-6222
Ambulatory Care Pharmacists: 604-806-8151. Please call two weeks in advance to book your
pharmacy appointments with the receptionist at 604-806-8060.

SAQUINAVIR (Invirase®)

What is Saquinavir (Invirase®)?

- A protease inhibitor used to inhibit the replication of the HIV virus in combination with other antiretroviral agents (ARV)
- Available as 200 mg hard gel capsules and 500 mg tablets

How do I take it?

- Dosing regimens may vary, depending on concurrent therapy
- Take within 2 hours of a meal or a substantial snack
- Swallow whole (do NOT chew)
- Alcohol is not recommended for the first 4 weeks of therapy and should be used with caution thereafter

Take saquinavir (Invirase®) every day as prescribed, as missing doses can lead to the development of drug resistance. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is close to your next scheduled dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Do not take two doses at the same time.

What should I expect?

- Most side effects are usually mild and include: fatigue, diarrhea and abdominal discomfort
- Headaches, muscle pain, nausea and dizziness may also occur
- Redistribution or accumulation of body fat, blood fat changes and/or diabetes may occur in patients receiving antiretroviral therapy. Your doctor or pharmacist can provide you with further information on this topic.

WARNING:

Protease inhibitors not only interact with each other, but may alter the level of other medications. Always check with the pharmacist (1-888-511-6222) or your doctor before starting any new therapies (prescription, non-prescription and herbal) to ensure the safety of the combination. This is important, as in some cases the combination may result in serious and/or life-threatening complications.

Medications that may require dosage adjustment or an alternative treatment, include:
Some anti-histamines, sedatives, anti-tuberculosis medications, anti-fungal medications, narcotic analgesics, methadone, heart/blood-pressure medications, psychiatric medications, anti-convulsants, transplant/immunosuppressant medications, warfarin, cholesterol lowering agents, sildenafil (Viagra®), oral contraceptives (birth control pill), ergot containing migraine medications.

Avoid the following Herbal/Natural remedies: St John's Wort, Milk Thistle, Garlic, as these may decrease levels of protease inhibitors.

How should I store it?

Saquinavir should be stored in a cool, dry place at room temperature (15-30 degrees C) and out of the reach of children.

Labwork to be done:

CBC with differential, liver enzymes, fasting glucose and lipid panel, plasma viral load, CD4 count