

Famvir(R) for cold sores

famciclovir

Consumer Medicine Information

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Famvir.

It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

The information in this leaflet was last updated on the date listed on the final page.

Some more recent information on the medicine may be available.

You should ensure that you speak to your pharmacist or doctor to obtain the most up to date information on the medicine.

You can also download the most up to date leaflet from www.novartis.com.au.

Those updates may contain important information about the medicine and its use of which you should be aware.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking Famvir against the benefits it can provide.

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

Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

You may need to read it again.

What Famvir is used for

Famvir is an antiviral medicine for adults and adolescents. It is used to treat recurrent outbreaks of cold sores.

Cold sores are an infection, usually of the lips and are caused by a virus called herpes simplex type 1.

The first outbreak usually occurs in childhood but the virus can become active again in the body, even after many years, resulting in recurrent outbreaks.

The main symptom is blistering of the lips or mouth, together with pain and burning.

Although Famvir does not cure the viral infection, it helps to relieve the symptoms and shorten their duration.

The best results are obtained if the medicine is started as soon as possible after the onset of symptoms of a cold sore, such as tingling, itching or burning, or the appearance of the first signs, such as redness or swelling.

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.

Famvir is only available with a doctor's prescription. It is not addictive.

This medicine is not recommended for use in children under 12 years of age.

Before you take Famvir

When you must not take it

Do not take Famvir if you have an allergy to:

- * famciclovir, the active ingredient
- * penciclovir, a related antiviral medicine
- * any of the other ingredients of Famvir 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 Famvir after the expiry date printed on the pack.

Do not take Famvir(R) tablets if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

In that case, return it to your pharmacist.

Before you start to take it

Tell your doctor if you have a problem with:

- * your body's immune system, which helps to fight off infections
- * your kidneys
- * your liver

Your doctor may want to take extra precautions in that case.

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

It is not known whether taking this medicine during pregnancy could affect your baby or whether the active ingredient in Famvir passes into the breast milk. Your doctor can discuss with you the benefits and risks involved.

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to any other medicines, foods, dyes or preservatives.

Your doctor will want to know if you are prone to allergies.

If you experience an allergic reaction, stop using the medicine and inform your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

Taking other medicines

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

Some medicines and Famvir may interfere with each other. These include medicines that can affect your kidneys, such as probenecid.

You may need to take different amounts of these medicines or you may need to take different medicines. Your doctor and pharmacist have more information.

If you have not told your doctor about any of these things, tell him/her before you start taking this medicine.

How to take Famvir

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

These instructions may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

If you do not understand the instructions on the label, ask your

doctor or pharmacist for help.

How much to take

The usual dose is three 500 mg tablets taken immediately as a single dose.

Your doctor may have prescribed a different dose.

Patients whose immune system does not work as well as it should, may need a different dose for a longer period of time.

Follow your doctor's instructions on how many Famvir tablets to take.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of the correct dose for you.

They will tell you exactly how much to take.

Follow the instructions that they give you.

For people who have reduced kidney function, the dose may need to be reduced.

Do not change the dose yourself, without your doctor's advice, regardless of how well you may feel.

When to take it

Take Famvir(R) tablets as soon as possible after the first symptoms (e.g. tingling, itching or burning) or signs (e.g. redness or swelling) of a cold sore appear.

How to take it

Take Famvir tablets with or without food.

Swallow the tablets whole with a full glass of water.

How long to take it

A single dose of 1500 mg Famvir tablets or two 750 mg Famvir tablet doses taken 12 hours apart is all that is necessary for treating cold sores in patients with an intact immune system.

Patients whose immune system does not work as well as it should, may need a different dose for a longer period of time.

Continue taking Famvir for the full course of cold sore treatment that your doctor has prescribed for you.

Do this even if your symptoms begin to clear up rapidly.

If you take too much (Overdose)

Immediately telephone your doctor or the Poisons Information Centre (telephone number 13 11 26), or go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital if you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much Famvir. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning. Keep the telephone numbers for these places handy.

While you are taking Famvir

Things you must do

If you become pregnant while taking Famvir, tell your doctor.

Your doctor can discuss with you the risks of taking it while you are pregnant.

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

Tell any other doctor, dentist or pharmacist who treats you that you are taking Famvir.

Things you must not do

Do not give this medicine to anyone else even if their condition seems to be the same as yours.

Do not use it to treat any other complaints unless your doctor tells you to.

Things to be careful of

Be careful driving, operating machinery or doing jobs that require you to be alert until you know how Famvir affects you.

This medicine can cause dizziness, sleepiness or confusion in some people.

Keep the areas affected by the virus as clean and dry as possible. Avoid touching or scratching the sore area.

You may spread the virus on your fingers.

Side effects

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

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects.

Do not be alarmed by these lists of possible side effects. You may not experience any of them. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- * headache
- * dizziness
- * nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting
- * diarrhoea

The above side effects are usually mild.

Tell your doctor as soon as possible if you notice any of the following:

- * a rash elsewhere on the body, that is separate from the cold sore
- * extreme sleepiness or confusion, usually in older people
- * hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- * signs of a possible liver problem such as persistent pain in the upper right abdomen, yellowing

of the skin and/or eyes, dark urine or pale bowel motions

The above side effects may need medical attention.

Tell your doctor immediately or go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital if any of the following side effects happen:

- * bruising or bleeding more easily than usual as it may indicate that the number of platelets (a type of blood cell responsible for blood clotting) in your blood are reduced
- * signs of a serious skin or mouth reaction, which may include widespread red, raised areas, blisters or sores
- * painful or swollen joints
- * aching muscles or muscle tenderness or weakness that is not caused by exercise.

The above side effects are very rare.

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

Other side effects not listed here or not yet known may happen in some people.

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

After using Famvir

Storage

Keep your medicine in the original container until it is time to take it.

Store your Famvir tablets in a dry place at room temperature.

Do not store your medicines in the bathroom or near a sink.

Do not leave the tablets in the car or on window sills.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines. Famvir(R) tablets will keep best if they are stored cool and dry.

Keep the medicine 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 this medicine or the expiry date has passed, ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicine you have left over.

Product description

What it looks like

Famvir 500 mg tablets are white, oval film-coated tablets with either "FAMVIR 500" or "FV 500" on one side and plain on the reverse side. Each carton contains 3 tablets.

Ingredients

Active Ingredient

Famvir 500 - contain 500 mg famciclovir per tablet.

Inactive ingredients

Famvir(R) 500 mg tablets contain:

- * hypromellose (E 464)
- * hydroxypropylcellulose (E 463)
- * macrogol
- * magnesium stearate (E 572)
- * sodium starch glycollate
- * titanium dioxide (E171)

Famvir(R) 500 mg tablets do not contain lactose, sucrose, gluten, tartrazine or any other azo dyes.

Sponsor

Famvir(R) tablets are supplied in Australia by:

NOVARTIS Pharmaceuticals
Australia Pty Limited
ABN 18 004 244 160
54 Waterloo Road

North Ryde NSW 2113
Telephone 1 800 671 203

Web site: www.novartis.com.au

(R) = Registered Trademark

This leaflet was prepared in
December 2007

Australian Registration Number.
Famvir 500 mg AUST R 67391