



BC Centre for Disease Control  
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## Acyclovir and Valacyclovir

Acyclovir (Zovirax<sup>®</sup>) and valacyclovir (Valtrex<sup>®</sup>) are antiviral medications taken by mouth to reduce the duration and discomfort of an outbreak of oral herpes (“cold sores”) or genital herpes.

### Allergies

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have an allergy to any **antiviral** medication such as: acyclovir (Zovirax<sup>®</sup>), famciclovir (Famvir<sup>®</sup>) or valacyclovir (Valtrex<sup>®</sup>).

### Pregnancy and Chest/Breastfeeding

- Acyclovir and valacyclovir may be used with caution during pregnancy and during chest/breastfeeding. Please consult your healthcare provider.

### CAUTION

- **Drug Interactions:** Tell your healthcare provider if you are taking any prescription, non-prescription, herbal, or recreational products. Not all individual drug interactions are listed in this document.
- **Do not take the following while taking acyclovir or valacyclovir:**
  - **Varicella vaccine (Varilrix<sup>®</sup>, Varivax<sup>®</sup>)**
  - **Herpes zoster vaccine (Zostavax<sup>®</sup>)**
  - **Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella vaccine (Priorix<sup>®</sup>-Tetra, ProQuad<sup>®</sup>)**

### Side Effects

- You may experience diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, headache, lightheadedness or dizziness.

### Instructions for Taking

- Acyclovir and valacyclovir may be taken with or without food.
- Taking with food may reduce the chance of stomach upset.
- Take with a full glass of water.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is close to your next dose, skip the dose and resume your usual dosing time. Do not take a double dose.

## Acyclovir and Valacyclovir (cont'd)

### Storage Instructions

- Store at room temperature between 15 and 30°C.
- Protect from light, heat, and moisture.
- Do not use medications beyond the printed expiry date.
- Keep away from the reach of children.

### Recommended Resources

- [Herpes: Patient Handout](#); 4pages, basic information
- [Herpes: A Patient Guide](#); 25pages, more detailed information

If you have any questions or need more information,  
please visit [www.smartsexresource.com](http://www.smartsexresource.com) or contact your healthcare provider.