

**OAK TREE CLINIC
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / PATIENTS**

DRUG NAME: ddl (DIDANOSINE)

BRAND NAME: Videx

THIS MEDICATION IS:

- An antiviral drug that slows the growth of HIV, the virus associated with AIDS. ddl does not cure AIDS, but it helps by decreasing the amount of virus in the body (**decreases the viral load**)
- A type of drug called a nucleoside analogue (**Nukes**) that slows the rate of copying (reproduction) of HIV by stopping the action of an enzyme called reverse transcriptase.
- Always used in combination with other antiviral medications

BENEFITS OF ddl:

- It improves the function of the immune system, helping to prevent other infections that may occur in patients with HIV disease (**increases the CD4 counts**)
- It may help you gain weight and improve your energy level.
- It will help to decrease muscle aches and night sweats.

HOW TO TAKE ddl:

Stomach acid and food decrease the amount of ddl that is absorbed into the blood stream. Therefore, take your dose at least 1/2 hour before meals or 2 to 3 hours after finishing a meal.

- ddl must always be taken on an empty stomach.

- The tablets **MUST** be chewed and followed by a full glass of water. They should **not be swallowed whole**. Each dose of tablets must consist of at least **two** tablets in order to effectively neutralize stomach acid.

- If you don't like chewing the tablets, you can dissolve the tablets in at least one ounce (30 mL) (preferably a full glass) of cold drinking water. You will need to stir up the dissolved tablets and drink it within one hour. You may prefer to crush the tablets between two spoons or in a coffee grinder, then dissolve in cold water.

- To improve the taste you can mix in some chocolate milk or apple juice, but avoid mixing with acidic juices (like orange juice) or coffee.

YOUR DDI DOSE IS: _____ TAKEN _____ TIMES A DAY TAKEN AT: _____
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The usual adult dose of ddl is either 300 mg once a day (less than 60 kg)
Or 200 mg twice a day (greater than 60 kg)
Or 400 mg once a day (greater than 60 kg)

******Take special attention to the strength of the ddl tablets the 100 mg and 150 mg tablets look very similar***

AVAILABILITY OF ddl:

ORAL SUSPENSION - FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN:

ddl is available as a white liquid containing 10mg of ddl per millilitre (10mg/mL). This liquid contains ddl as well as some antacid (Maalox) which is necessary to neutralize the stomach acid so that the drug will be absorbed.

The solution is stable for 30 days **if kept refrigerated**.

Shake the bottle **well** before pouring out each dose.

Always measure each dose with the specially marked spoon, cup or oral syringe provided by the pharmacist. (link to how to self mix ddl suspension)

TABLETS - FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS:

ddl is available as mandrin orange flavoured tablets containing 25, 50, 100 or 150 mg of ddl. The tablets are "large" because they contain an antacid which is necessary for the drug to be absorbed.

IF YOU MISS A DOSE:

If you take your ddl twice a day:

- If it is **more than 6 hours** before the next dose, then take missed dose as soon as you remember and then take the next dose at the normal time.
- But if it is **less than 6 hours** before the next dose, then forget about the missed dose and take the next dose at the normal time
- **Do NOT** take a double dose of this medication.
- If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking a dose or if you see bits of the tablets, then you should repeat the dose.

If you take your ddl once a day:

- If it is **more than 12 hours** before the next dose, then take missed dose as soon as you remember and then take the next dose at the normal time.
- But if it is **less than 12 hours** before the next dose, then forget about the missed dose and take the next dose at the normal time
- **Do NOT** take a double dose of this medication.
- If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking a dose or if you see bits of the tablets, then you should repeat the dose.

PROBLEMS WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED:

Uncommon but serious side effects of didanosine include pancreatitis and peripheral neuropathy.

Check with your doctor right away if any of the following side effects occur:

- severe stomach pain with or without nausea and vomiting (symptoms of pancreatitis)
- aching, numbness, tingling, burning or pain in the legs, feet, arms or hands(symptoms of peripheral neuropathy)
- skin rash or fever.

The following side effects sometimes happen and should go away when your body gets used to the drug. Call the clinic pharmacist, nurse or doctor if they continue or are very bothersome:

- diarrhea, mild nausea and vomiting, restlessness, headache and difficulty sleeping (more common).
- constipation, aching muscles, decreased appetite (less common).
- any other side effect of concern to you.

The following changes in blood tests may occur and will be monitored by your doctor regularly. These effects are usually reversible and can be managed by reducing the dose or stopping the drug permanently or for a period of time:

- increase in liver function tests.
- increase in pancreatic enzyme levels (amylase).
- increase in uric acid levels
- increase in triglyceride levels

DRUGS WHICH CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WHEN USED WITH ddl:

- AZT, ritonavir, nelfinavir, indinavir and saquinavir and ddl should be taken at least one hour apart.
- ddl is combined with an antacid to help its absorption in the stomach. The antacid reduces the amount of **dapsone, ketoconazole, ciprofloxacin, tetracycline and doxycycline**. These drugs must be taken at least 2 hours before or after ddl.
- Many drugs can be taken safely with ddl, but some may interact and cause unwanted effects. It is important to tell your doctor, pharmacist and nurse about all of the medicines you may take, including any natural herbal products and those that you get without a prescription from your doctor, and to check with them before taking any new medicines.
- Do not drink alcohol during the first month of treatment with ddl. After that, it is suggested that alcohol be avoided or taken only occasionally.

CAUTIONS:

- Throw away any expired or leftover medication.
- Keep out of the reach of all children. Your doctor or Poison Control Centre should be contacted in the event of accidental overdose of this or any other drug.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

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