RIBAVIRIN

rye-ba-vye-rin

What does it do?

Ribavirin is used with other medicines to treat Hepatitis C virus infection.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart, blood, or kidney problems, or if you have HIV.
- *Ribavirin* must **not** be used if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding because of a high risk of abnormalities in the developing baby. It is very important to wait at least 6 months after stopping *ribavirin* before trying to get pregnant.
- Both men and women should use reliable contraception while taking *ribavirin* and for 6 months after stopping.
- Your doctor may do a heart test (ECG) before you start and while you are taking *ribavirin*.

How should you take it?

Take *ribavirin* as directed with food and a glass of water. It is very important to take it regularly. If you often forget to take *ribavirin*, it may not work as well.

What if you forget a dose?

If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Symptoms of liver problems including: yellow skin or eyes, itching, dark urine, pale bowel motions, abdominal pain Reduced number of blood cells that fight infections in your body - symptoms include: fever, chills, sore throat or generally feeling unwell Tired, dizzy, short of breath, pale skin (may be anaemia) Chest pain	Tell your doctor immediately
Low mood, irritability	Tell your doctor
Loss of appetite, weight loss, diarrhoea, indigestion, nausea Dry mouth, changes in taste Cough Headache, trouble sleeping Dry, itchy or red skin, more sensitive to sunlight (sunburn or rash)	Tell your doctor if troublesome

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- You will need regular blood tests while taking *ribavirin* to monitor its effects on your liver and blood.
- Do not stop taking *ribavirin* without talking to your doctor first.