

FAVIC

Treatment of shingles

famciclovir

Consumer Medicine Information

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about FAVIC.

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

All medicines have benefits and risks. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking FAVIC against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns about taking this medicine.

Keep this leaflet with your medicine. You may need to read it again.

What FAVIC is used for

FAVIC is an antiviral medicine that is used to treat shingles in adults and adolescents. Shingles is a condition that is caused by a herpes virus called varicella zoster, the same virus that causes chicken pox. The virus can become active again in the body, even after many years, resulting in shingles. The main symptom is a rash that can cause pain, burning and blisters.

Although FAVIC 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 first symptoms begin to appear.

Your doctor may have prescribed FAVIC for another reason. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why this medicine has been prescribed for you.

FAVIC is available only with a doctor's prescription.

There is no evidence that this medicine is addictive.

FAVIC is not recommended for use in children under 12 years of age, as the safety and efficacy of famciclovir in this age group has not been established

Before you take it

When you must not take it

Do not take FAVIC if you are allergic to medicines containing:

- Famciclovir, the active ingredient
- Penciclovir, a related antiviral medicine
- Any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- skin rash, itching or hives
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or any parts of the body.

Do not take FAVIC if the expiry date (Exp.) printed on the pack has passed.

Do not take it if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

If you are not sure whether you should start taking this medicine, talk to your doctor.

Before you start to take it

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

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

FAVIC should not be used during pregnancy unless necessary. Your doctor will discuss with you the potential risks of taking FAVIC during pregnancy, and will also advise you if you should take FAVIC while breast-feeding, based on the benefits and risks of your personal situation.

Tell your doctor if you have, or have had, any of the following medical conditions:

- problems with your immune system (which helps fight off infections)
- kidney disease
- liver disease.

Your doctor may want to take special care if you have any of these conditions.

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell them before you start taking FAVIC.

Taking other medicines

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

Some medicines and FAVIC may interfere with each other. These include:

- probenecid, a prescription medicine used to treat gout (a disease with painful, swollen joints caused by uric acid crystals) and to increase blood levels of penicillin-type antibiotics
- raloxifene, a medicine used to treat osteoporosis (a disease which causes bones to become less dense, gradually making them weaker, more brittle and likely to break)
- medicines that can affect your kidneys.

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.

Your doctor can tell you what to do if you are taking any of these medicines.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking FAVIC.

How to take it

Swallow the tablets whole with a full glass of water.

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

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

The tablets may be taken with or without food. It is not necessary to chew or crush the tablet.

If you do not understand the instructions on the box, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.

How much to take

Your doctor will tell you how much FAVIC to take.

The usual dose is one 250 mg tablet three times each day for seven days, beginning no later than 72 hours after the rash appears.

Your doctor may have prescribed a different dose.

For people whose immune system does not work as well as it should, the dose and duration of treatment may be increased.

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

Follow your doctor's instructions on how many FAVIC 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.

How to take FAVIC

Swallow the tablets whole with a full glass of water.

FAVIC can be taken with or without food.

When to take it

If you have been prescribed three tablets a day, take one tablet when you get up in the morning, one in the afternoon and one just before going to bed at night.

Try to take your medicine at about the same time each day.

Taking it at the same time each day will have the best effect. It will also help you remember when to take it.

How long to take it for

Continue taking your medicine for the full course of treatment.

To help clear up your infection, you must take the full course of treatment, even if you feel your condition has improved after a few days.

If you forget to take it

Take it as soon as you remember, and then go back to taking your medicine as you would normally.

Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.

This may increase the chance of you getting an unwanted side effect.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine, ask your pharmacist for some hints.

If you take too much (overdose)

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

You may need medical attention.

Taking too much FAVIC may affect your kidneys. In people who already have kidney problems it may, rarely, lead to kidney failure if their dose is not correctly lowered.

While you are taking it

Things you must do

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

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

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

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

Things you must not do

Do not stop taking FAVIC, or change the dosage without checking with your doctor.

If you stop the tablets suddenly, your condition may worsen or you may have unwanted side effects.

Do not take it to treat any other conditions unless your doctor tells you to.

Do not give FAVIC to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Things to be careful of

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking any medicine.

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how FAVIC affects you.

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

Things that may help your condition

Take the following precautions to avoid spreading the virus:

- keep the areas affected by the virus as clean and dry as possible
- wear loose-fitting clothing to avoid irritating the blisters
- avoid touching or scratching the sore area as 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 FAVIC.

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

Do not be alarmed by this list 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
- abdominal pain
- diarrhoea
- itching or an itchy rash (urticaria)
- abnormal liver function test results

These side effects are usually mild.

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

- a rash on other parts of your body
- extreme sleepiness or confusion, usually in older people

- hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- painful or swollen joints
- aching muscles or muscle tenderness or weakness that is not caused by exercise.
- yellowing of the skin or eyes (signs of jaundice)
- palpitations (signs of abnormal heart beat)

You may need medical attention if you have the above side effects.

Tell your doctor immediately, or go to Accident and Emergency at the nearest hospital if you notice any of the following:

- swelling below the surface of the skin (e.g. swelling around the face, eye, eyelid or throat)
- unexplained bruising, reddish or purplish patches on the skin 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
- severe blistering of the skin or mucous membranes of the lips, eyes, mouth, nasal passages or genitals (signs of a serious skin reaction)
- purple patches, itching, burning of the skin (signs of inflamed blood vessels)
- seizures or fits
- difficulty breathing or swallowing, wheezing or coughing, light-headedness, changes in alertness, skin reddening, facial/throat swelling, blue discoloration of the lips, tongue or skin (signs of severe allergic reaction).

These are serious but very rare side effects. You may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

After taking it

Storage

Keep FAVIC 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.

Keep your tablets in the blister pack until it is time to take them.

If you take tablets out of the pack they may not keep well.

Keep your tablets in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25°C.

Do not store FAVIC or any other medicine in the bathroom or near a sink.

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

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Disposal

If your doctor tells you to stop taking FAVIC, or your tablets have passed their expiry date, ask your pharmacist what to do with any that are left over.

Product description

What it looks like

FAVIC comes in two strengths of tablet for the treatment of shingles:

- FAVIC 250 – white to off-white, round tablet with ‘FC’ over ‘250’ on one side. Each pack contains 21 tablets.
- FAVIC 500 – white to off-white, capsule-shaped tablet with ‘FC 500’ on one side. Each pack contains 30 tablets.

Ingredients

The active ingredient in FAVIC is famciclovir:

- each FAVIC 250 tablet contains 250 mg of famciclovir
- each FAVIC 500 tablet contains 500 mg of famciclovir.

The tablets also contain:

- sodium starch glycolate
- microcrystalline cellulose
- hypromellose
- magnesium stearate
- Opadry II 85F18378 White (ARTG No 12135).

The tablets do not contain gluten, lactose, sucrose, tartrazine or any other azo dyes.

Manufacturer

Arrotex Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd
15-17 Chapel Street
Cremorne VIC 3121

Australian registration numbers:
FAVIC 250 - AUST R 159611
FAVIC 500 - AUST R 159619

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