Nelfinavir

Description

Nelfinavir (also called Viracept®) is used to treat infection caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This medicine is one of a group called protease inhibitors (PIs). Protease is the part of the virus that allows it to multiply, leave the cell, and move into the blood and body. Nelfinavir can slow down how soon you will see symptoms or slow the damage caused by HIV, but it cannot cure HIV infection. This medicine is available as an oral powder and as a 250-mg tablet. Both are taken by mouth.

How to take nelfinavir

• Nelfinavir is usually taken 2 or 3 times a day.
• Take nelfinavir with food.
• If you are unable to swallow tablets, dissolve crushed nelfinavir tablets or the oral powder in a small amount of water, milk, or baby formula. As soon as the medicine dissolves, you must drink all of the liquid to get the full dose.

Possible side effects

• Diarrhea
• Nausea
• High blood sugar levels
• Rash
• High blood cholesterol levels

These are the most common side effects, but there may be others. Please report all side effects to the doctor or nurse.

In case of a severe side effect or reaction, call the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist at 595-3300. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), and press 0 once the call is connected.

Special instructions

• Store nelfinavir tablets and oral powder at room temperature. Keep this medicine away from heat and moisture.

This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.
Blood tests can find some side effects, such as a high level of blood cholesterol and a high level of blood sugar. It is very important that you come to the clinic regularly for blood tests.

Several medicines may affect the way nelfinavir works. These medicines include carbamazepine, phenytoin, rifampin, and St. John’s wort.

Nelfinavir may affect the way other medicines work. These medicines include amiodarone, atorvastatin, cyclosporin, lovastatin, birth control pills, and simvastatin.

Always tell the doctor if you are taking any of these medicines, or if you start taking any new medicines while you are taking nelfinavir.