

## Antiviral tablets and suspensions

Examples: Aciclovir (Zovirax®), Valtrex® (Valaciclovir)

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### How do they work?

Antiviral medications are used to treat infections caused by viruses. They stop viruses from spreading or multiplying. Eye ointment or drops are used to treat simple viral eye infections. Tablets or suspensions might also be required in more severe cases, or if the infection is not responding to eye drops. It can take a few days before your child's eyes feel or look better.

### What should I tell the pharmacist or doctor?

Tell the pharmacist and doctor if your child is allergic to any antibiotic or other medication.

### How often and for how long should I give antivirals?

**Antivirals need to be given at regular times throughout the day.**

The pharmacist or doctor will tell you how frequently and whether the antivirals need to be taken with food or on an empty stomach. Your child must drink plenty of liquids such as water whilst taking antiviral medications. Antiviral suspensions require the bottle to be well shaken before use. Some antiviral tablets can be dispersed in a glass of water, which should be stirred before drinking. Check with the pharmacist or in the product leaflet provided.

**You should always complete the full course of treatment, even if your child seems better. Otherwise the infection could return.**

### What are the main side effects?

Rarely, antivirals can cause an allergic reaction. The signs of an allergic reaction can include: severe redness, swelling and irritation of the eye or eyelids, rash, swelling of the lips or face, or difficulty with breathing.

Other side effects are not common but can include: feeling sick, diarrhoea, headache, drowsiness, being very irritable and, very rarely, kidney problems or low blood cell counts.

**If your child experiences any of these symptoms, stop the medication and seek medical attention.**

**How do you store antivirals?**

Tablets/capsules and suspensions can usually be stored at room temperature in their original packaging. Aciclovir suspension should be discarded 28 days after opening.

Do not use medicines after the expiry date written on the packaging.

**Need more information?**

Please refer to the packaging and product leaflet for further information or contact the pharmacy department on: 020 7566 2362

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**Ph: 020 7253 3411 [www.moorfields.nhs.uk](http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk)**

**Moorfields Direct telephone helpline: 020 7566 2345**

**Monday to Friday 09.00 to 16.30 for further information and advice.**