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2. Sustiva

Sustiva

Generic name: [efavirenz](#) [e-FAV-ir-enz]

Drug class: [NNRTIs](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Mar 12, 2025.

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The Sustiva brand name has been **discontinued** in the U.S. If generic versions of this product have been approved by the FDA, there may be [generic equivalents available](#).

What is Sustiva?

Sustiva is an antiviral medicine that prevents [human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\)](#) from multiplying in your body.

Sustiva is used to treat HIV, the virus that can cause [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome \(AIDS\)](#).

Sustiva is for adults and children who are at least 3 months old and weigh at least 8 pounds. This medicine is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

Warnings

You should not use Sustiva if you also take elbasvir and grazoprevir ([Zepatier](#)) to treat [hepatitis C](#).

Sustiva may cause serious psychiatric symptoms including confusion, severe depression, suicidal thoughts, aggression, extreme fear, hallucinations, or unusual behavior. Contact your doctor at once if you have any of these side effects, even if you have had them before.

Do not use efavirenz without telling your doctor if you are pregnant. It could harm the unborn baby. Use two forms of birth control, including a barrier form (such as a condom or diaphragm with spermicide gel) while you are taking this medicine, and for at least 12 weeks after your treatment ends. Tell your doctor if you become pregnant during treatment.

Taking Sustiva will not prevent you from passing HIV to other people. Talk with your doctor about safe methods of preventing HIV transmission during sex. Sharing drug or medicine needles is never safe, even for a healthy person.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use Sustiva if you are allergic to efavirenz, or if you also take elbasvir and grazoprevir ([Zepatier](#)) to treat

hepatitis C.

Do not take with [Atripla](#) (combination efavirenz, [emtricitabine](#), and [tenofovir](#)), unless your doctor tells you to.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- liver disease (including [hepatitis B](#) or C);
- long QT syndrome;
- a seizure;
- mental illness or psychosis;
- heart disease; or
- if you drink large amounts of alcohol or have a history of injection drug use.

Do not use Sustiva if you are pregnant. It could harm the unborn baby or cause birth defects. Use 2 forms of birth control, including a barrier form (condom, diaphragm, cervical cap, or contraceptive sponge) to prevent pregnancy while you are using this medicine and for at least 12 weeks after your last dose. **Tell your doctor if you become pregnant during treatment.**

Hormonal contraception ([birth control pills](#), injections, implants, skin patches, and vaginal rings) **may not be effective enough to prevent pregnancy while you are taking Sustiva.**

HIV can be passed to your baby if the virus is not controlled during pregnancy. Your name may be listed on a registry to track any effects of antiviral medicine on the baby.

Women with HIV or AIDS should not breast-feed a baby. Even if your baby is born without HIV, the virus may be passed to the baby in your breast milk.

 [Sustiva pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take Sustiva?

Take Sustiva exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Sustiva must be given in combination with other antiviral medications and it should not be used alone. Your disease may become resistant to efavirenz if you do not take it in combination with other HIV medicines your doctor has prescribed.

Take Sustiva on an empty stomach at bedtime.

Read and carefully follow any Instructions for Use provided with your medicine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand these instructions.

Swallow the **tablet** whole and do not crush, chew, or break it.

If you cannot swallow a capsule whole, open it and sprinkle the medicine into a spoonful of applesauce, yogurt, grape jelly, or infant formula (if you are giving the medicine to a baby). Swallow the mixture right away. Do not save it for later use.

After taking Sustiva using the sprinkle method, do not eat for the next 2 hours. If you give Sustiva mixed with infant

formula to a baby, do not feed more formula for at least 2 hours afterward.

Efavirenz doses are based on weight in children. Your child's dose needs may change if the child gains or loses weight.

You will need frequent medical tests.

Take Sustiva regularly to get the most benefit. Skipping doses may increase the risk of your virus becoming resistant to antiviral medicine.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

This medicine may affect a drug-screening urine test and you may have false results. Tell the laboratory staff that you use efavirenz.

Use all HIV medications as directed and read all medication guides you receive. Do not change your dose or dosing schedule without your doctor's advice. Every person with HIV should remain under the care of a doctor.

Dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for HIV Infection:

600 mg orally once a day

Comments:

-This drug should be used with a protease inhibitor and/or NRTIs.

Use: In combination with other antiretroviral agents, for the treatment of HIV-1 infection

Usual Adult Dose for Nonoccupational Exposure:

US CDC recommendations: 600 mg orally once a day

Duration of therapy: 28 days

Comments:

-This drug should be used with ([lamivudine](#) or emtricitabine) plus ([zidovudine](#) or tenofovir); recommended as the preferred NNRTI-based regimen for nonoccupational postexposure prophylaxis of [HIV infection](#).

-Prophylaxis should be started as soon as possible, within 72 hours of exposure.

-Not approved by US FDA.

Usual Adult Dose for Occupational Exposure:

US Public Health Service working group recommendations: 600 mg orally once a day

Duration of therapy: 28 days, if tolerated

Comments:

-An alternative antiretroviral agent for use as HIV postexposure prophylaxis only with expert consultation

-Prophylaxis should be started as soon as possible, preferably within hours after exposure.

-The optimal duration of prophylaxis is unknown and may differ based on institution protocol.

-The most current therapeutic guidelines should be consulted for more information.

-Not approved by US FDA.

Usual Pediatric Dose for HIV Infection:

3 months or older:

3.5 to less than 5 kg: 100 mg orally once a day

5 to less than 7.5 kg: 150 mg orally once a day

7.5 to less than 15 kg: 200 mg orally once a day

15 to less than 20 kg: 250 mg orally once a day

20 to less than 25 kg: 300 mg orally once a day

25 to less than 32.5 kg: 350 mg orally once a day

32.5 to less than 40 kg: 400 mg orally once a day

40 kg or more: 600 mg orally once a day

Use: In combination with other antiretroviral agents, for the treatment of HIV-1 infection

 [Detailed Sustiva dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

Get your prescriptions refilled before you run out of medicine completely.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What to avoid

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how this medicine will affect you. Your reactions could be impaired.

Drinking alcohol can increase certain side effects of efavirenz.

Sustiva side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Sustiva:** ([hives](#), difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) **or a severe skin reaction** (fever, [sore throat](#), burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple [skin rash](#) with blistering and peeling).

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- a seizure;
- hallucinations, trouble concentrating, trouble speaking or moving (these symptoms may occur months or years after you start taking efavirenz);
- **nervous system problems** - dizziness, drowsiness, confusion, trouble concentrating, strange dreams, insomnia, or problems with speech, balance, or muscle movement;
- **serious psychiatric symptoms** - anxiety, paranoia, unusual behavior, feeling sad or hopeless, hallucinations,

suicidal thoughts; or

- **liver problems** - nausea, stomach pain, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes);

Sustiva may cause serious psychiatric symptoms including confusion, feeling sad or hopeless, suicidal thoughts, [anxiety](#), paranoia, hallucinations, trouble speaking or moving, or unusual behavior. Contact your doctor at once if you have any of these side effects, even if you have had them before.

Efavirenz affects your immune system, which may cause certain side effects (even weeks or months after you've taken this medicine). Tell your doctor if you have:

- **signs of a new infection** - fever, night sweats, swollen glands, [cold sores](#), cough, wheezing, [diarrhea](#), [weight loss](#);
- trouble speaking or swallowing, problems with balance or eye movement, weakness or prickly feeling; or
- swelling in your neck or throat (enlarged thyroid), menstrual changes, [impotence](#).

Common Sustiva side effects may include:

- nausea, [vomiting](#);
- [dizziness](#), drowsiness, trouble concentrating;
- rash;
- [headache](#), tired feeling;
- sleep problems ([insomnia](#)), strange dreams; or
- changes in the shape or location of body fat (especially in your arms, legs, face, neck, breasts, and waist).

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Sustiva side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Descovy

Descovy is used to treat and prevent HIV infection in adults and adolescents. When used for HIV-1 ...

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7.4 / 10

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8.3 / 10

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What other drugs will affect Sustiva?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Sustiva can cause a serious heart problem. Your risk may be higher if you also use certain other medicines for infections, [asthma](#), heart problems, [high blood pressure](#), [depression](#), mental illness, cancer, [malaria](#), or HIV.

Other drugs may interact with efavirenz, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Sustiva drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Sustiva interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Sustiva

+

Enter a drug name

Add

Frequently asked questions

- [What is the difference between HIV treatments Symfi and Symfi Lo?](#)
- [What drugs are contained in the HIV treatment Symfi Lo?](#)

References

1. [Sustiva Product Label](#)

More about Sustiva (efavirenz)

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Reviews \(6\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
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Professional resources

- [Sustiva prescribing information](#)
- [Efavirenz \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Related treatment guides

- [HIV Infection](#)
- [Nonoccupational Exposure](#)
- [Occupational Exposure](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and

use Sustiva only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability		
	Discontinued	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
10+ years	FDA approved 1998	▼

User Reviews & Ratings

6 Reviews

Images

Sustiva 600 mg (SUSTIVA SUSTIVA)



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