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2. Emtricitabine

Emtricitabine

Generic name: emtricitabine [*em-trye-SYE-ta-been*]

Brand name: [Emtriva](#)

Dosage forms: oral capsule (200 mg), oral solution (10 mg/mL)

Drug class: [Nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors \(NRTIs\)](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Apr 4, 2025. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

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What is emtricitabine?

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

Emtricitabine is used to treat HIV, the virus that can cause [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome](#) (AIDS). **Emtricitabine is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.**

Emtricitabine may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Emtricitabine side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Early **symptoms of lactic acidosis** may get worse over time and this condition can be fatal. Get emergency medical help if you have even mild symptoms: [muscle pain](#) or weakness, numb or cold feeling in your arms and legs, trouble breathing, stomach pain, nausea with vomiting, fast or uneven heart rate, dizziness, or feeling very weak or tired.

Call your doctor at once if you have **symptoms of liver problems**: swelling around your midsection, upper stomach pain, nausea, loss of appetite, dark urine, or jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Emtricitabine may increase your risk of certain infections or [autoimmune disorders](#) by changing the way your immune system works. Symptoms may occur weeks or months after you start treatment with emtricitabine. **Tell your doctor if you have:**

- signs of a new [infection](#)--fever, night sweats, swollen glands, mouth sores, diarrhea, stomach pain, [weight loss](#);
- chest pain (especially when you breathe), dry cough, wheezing, feeling short of breath;
- [cold sores](#), sores on your genital or anal area;
- rapid heart rate, feeling anxious or irritable, weakness or prickly feeling, problems with balance or eye movement;

- trouble speaking or swallowing, severe lower [back pain](#), loss of bladder or bowel control; or
- swelling in your neck or throat (enlarged thyroid), menstrual changes, [impotence](#), loss of interest in sex.

Common side effects of emtricitabine may include:

- headache, dizziness, weakness;
- indigestion, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea;
- sleep problems, strange dreams;
- rash, skin discoloration; 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.

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

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Warnings

Do not take Emtriva if you also take other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine.

Emtricitabine may cause a serious condition called **lactic acidosis**. Get emergency medical help if you have even mild symptoms such as: muscle pain or weakness, numb or cold feeling in your arms and legs, trouble breathing, stomach pain, nausea with vomiting, fast or uneven heart rate, dizziness, or feeling very weak or tired.

If you have hepatitis B you may develop liver symptoms after you stop taking emtricitabine, even months after stopping.

Before taking this medicine

You should not take emtricitabine if you are allergic to emtricitabine.

Do not take Emtriva if you also use other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (such as Atripla, [Combivir](#), [Complera](#), Descovy, Dutrebis, EpiVir, Epzicom, Genvoya, Odefsey, [Stribild](#), Triumeq, or [Trizivir](#)).

To make sure emtricitabine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- [liver disease](#) (especially [hepatitis B](#)); or
- kidney disease.

Some people taking this medicine develop a serious condition called **lactic acidosis**. This may be more likely in women, in people who are [overweight](#) or have liver disease, and in people who have taken [HIV/AIDS](#) medication for a long time. Talk with your doctor about your risk.

HIV can be passed to your baby if you are not properly treated during pregnancy. Take all of your HIV medicines as directed to control your infection.

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry. This is to track the outcome of the pregnancy and to evaluate any effects of emtricitabine 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.

Emtricitabine is not approved for use by anyone younger than 3 months old.

How should I take emtricitabine?

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Emtricitabine can be taken with or without food.

Measure **liquid medicine** with the dosing syringe provided, or with a special dose-measuring spoon or medicine cup. If you do not have a dose-measuring device, ask your pharmacist for one.

If a child is using this medicine, tell your doctor if the child has any changes in weight. Emtricitabine doses are based on weight in children, and any changes may affect your child's dose.

Do not take emtricitabine as your only HIV medication. HIV/AIDS is usually treated with a combination of drugs. Use all medications as directed by your doctor. Read the medication guide or patient instructions provided with each medication. Do not change your doses or medication schedule without your doctor's advice. Every person with HIV or AIDS should remain under the care of a doctor.

While using emtricitabine, you may need frequent blood tests. Your kidney and liver function may also need to be checked.

Get your prescription refilled before you run out of medicine completely. Your disease may become resistant to emtricitabine if you stop taking the medication even for a short time.

Store **capsules** at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and direct light.

Store **liquid** in the refrigerator. Do not freeze.

Emtricitabine **liquid** kept at room temperature must be used within 3 months.

If you have hepatitis B you may develop liver symptoms after you stop taking this medication, even months after stopping. Your doctor may want to check your liver function for several months after you stop using emtricitabine.

 [Detailed Emtricitabine dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose.

Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

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

What should I avoid while taking emtricitabine?

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

What other drugs will affect emtricitabine?

Other drugs may interact with emtricitabine, 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.

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

Does emtricitabine interact with my other drugs?

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

emtricitabine

+

Enter a drug name

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication 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	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
	Drug history at FDA

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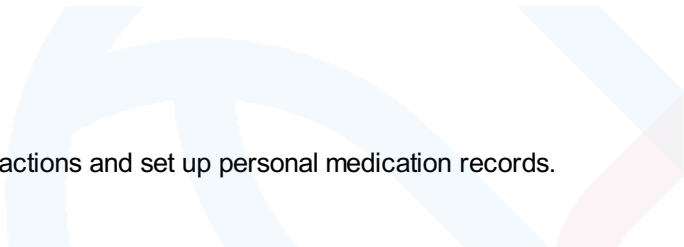
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