

*P A T I E N T I N F O R M A T I O N*

**QUESTIONS AFTER STARTING TO TAKE  
MEDICATION FOR HIV**

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## INTRODUCTION

You recently started taking medication against the hiv-virus. This folder provides information on issues such as the problems that may arise. If you still have questions having read this folder, please do not hesitate to ask. The doctors and nurses will be pleased to explain in more detail.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE TO VOMIT AFTER TAKING THE MEDICATION?

If you see the remainder of the medication in the vomit, then you must take another dose immediately.

If you have taken the medication **without eating**, and you have vomited **within the hour**, you must take another dose immediately.

If you have taken the medication **with food** and you have vomited **within three hours**, you must take another dose immediately.

If you have vomited **more than three hours after taking the medication**, then you don't need to take another dose of your medication.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE DIARRHOEA?

Diarrhoea can have a number of causes. With persistent diarrhoea (more than three times a day) contact your doctor. Always inform your doctor if there is blood in your diarrhoea.

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## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF TAKING THE MEDICATION MAKES YOU FEEL SICK OR IF YOU EXPERIENCE SIDE EFFECTS?**

Never stop taking the medication on your own initiative and never change the prescribed dose in any way. This increases the risk of resistance. If the complaints persist or worsen, consult with your doctor.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SWALLOW THE MEDICATION?**

If the medication may be taken with food, you can first crush it in some jam or yoghurt, for instance. Most drugs can be crushed, except for capsules.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATION?**

Take your medication immediately, as soon as you remember, and then return to the usual pattern.

## **WHAT ABOUT ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES, HOMEOPATHY AND PLANT EXTRACTS?**

Every form of medication, even so-called harmless plant extracts and products that you can obtain from a pharmacy or drug store without a prescription, should first be discussed with your doctor. Even 'harmless' products can strengthen or weaken the effects of your medication.

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## **IS THE USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PERMITTED?**

Moderate alcohol consumption (one to two units a day) is permitted. Marijuana probably has no effect on your medication, but this is not proven.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE (ALMOST) NO DRUGS LEFT?**

Contact your doctor (GP) immediately to ask for another prescription. Avoid running out of your medication completely, because it may take one or two working days before your pharmacist can supply the new drugs.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN THE TIME CHANGES (SUMMER OR WINTER TIME) OR WHEN YOU GO ON HOLIDAY?**

One hour's difference, such as winter or summer time, is not a problem. If there is more than one hour's difference, it is best to contact your doctor or nurse for advice.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE TAKING PART IN RAMADAN?**

Between sundown and sunrise, you can take the medication. If these hours do not correspond to the times when you should usually take your medication, contact your doctor or nurse for advice, and discuss this with your imam. Never stop taking your medication on your own initiative.

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## PRACTICAL DETAILS

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