Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Pediatric HIV Infection

Developed by the HHS Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV—A Working Group of the NIH Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council (OARAC)

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It is emphasized that concepts relevant to HIV management evolve rapidly. The Panels have a mechanism to update recommendations on a regular basis, and the most recent information is available on the Clinicalinfo website (https://clinicalinfo.hiv.gov/).

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What's New in the Pediatric Guidelines

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The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) has reviewed and updated the text and references of previous versions of the *Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Pediatric HIV Infection* published on June 27, 2024. Key updates are summarized below. In the PDF version of the Guidelines, these changes are highlighted in yellow.

When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection

- In antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive children and adolescents with cryptococcal meningitis, tuberculous meningitis, and disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex disease, the Panel recommends initiation of treatment for the opportunistic infection first, before ART initiation (see Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Opportunistic Infections in Children With and Exposed to HIV).

Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy

- Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy has been updated to emphasize optimization to integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI)–based regimens for children with perinatally acquired HIV. The Panel recommends the following:
  - INSTI drugs have demonstrated higher efficacy and improved safety profiles compared to non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) or protease inhibitors (PIs). INSTI-based ART regimens are *Preferred* initial regimens for infants, children, and adolescents; thus, optimization to an INSTI-based regimen for eligible children and adolescents should be offered.
- Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression has been updated to include the addition of Symtuza for children weighing ≥40 kg.
- Recommendations have been updated in Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure:
  - When using a new regimen with only two fully active antiretroviral (ARV) medications, at least one should have a high barrier to resistance (i.e., second-generation INSTI or boosted PI).
  - If two fully active ARV medications are not available, at least one fully active medication with a high barrier to resistance (i.e., second-generation INSTI, boosted PI) should be used plus two partially active nucleos(t)ide reverse transcriptase inhibitors, (i.e., tenofovir disoproxil fumarate or tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) with lamivudine [3TC] or emtricitabine (FTC); abacavir and 3TC). In this case, frequent viral load monitoring is recommended for early detection of virologic failure.

Special Considerations for Antiretroviral Therapy Use in Adolescents With HIV

- New text with supporting references has been added to the section. Without ideal HIV care, models project that adolescents with perinatally acquired HIV have life expectancies 10 to 12 years shorter than youth without HIV, highlighting the importance of specialized care that addresses critical barriers to optimal health outcomes in this population.

Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Drug sections and fixed-dose combination (FDC) tables, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents, in this appendix were reviewed and updated to include recent pediatric data, dosing and safety information, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approvals of new formulations and FDCs. Significant changes are summarized below:

- In addition to the Dolutegravir updates for 2024 (published in June 2024 with highlighted updates republished in August 2025), the following updates are new for the 2024 Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Appendix A:
  - The FDA approved rilpivirine (RPV) tablets for oral suspension (Edurant PED) for children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg for use in combination with other ARV drugs (see Rilpivirine).
  - The FDA approved use of FTC, RPV, and TAF (ODEFSEY) as a complete regimen for the treatment of HIV-1 in pediatric patients weighing ≥25 kg (see Rilpivirine, Tenofovir Alafenamide, and Emtricitabine).
  - The FDA approved use of darunavir and cobicistat (Prezcobix) for children weighing ≥25 kg to ≤40 kg for use in combination with other ARV drugs (see Cobicistat).

December 19, 2024

Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding

- Bulleted recommendations now include information from the text on counseling about the infant feeding options of formula feeding, use of banked donor milk, or breastfeeding. Recommendations also address clinical management if viremia is identified.
  - In the case of a detectable viral load during breastfeeding, the Panels recommend breastfeeding be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated while the viral load is rechecked; causes for the viremia are assessed, and, when applicable, adherence counseling is reinforced **(AII).** Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when HIV RNA is ≥200 copies/mL **(CIII).**
  - Depending on the level and persistence of viremia during breastfeeding, next steps may include initiating or modifying infant ARV prophylaxis, permanently stopping breastfeeding, and considering the need for additional infant HIV testing.
  - If the repeat viral load is undetectable, a joint decision should be made by the parent and providers about whether breastfeeding may resume **(AIII).**

Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children

- Section text and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV have been revised to align with changes in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.
- The Panels recommend virologic diagnostic testing at birth using an HIV nucleic acid test, which should generally be performed for all infants with perinatal HIV exposure but is not necessary for infants at low risk of HIV acquisition (HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL from 20 weeks of gestation through delivery put infants at low risk of HIV acquisition). Birth testing should be performed in infants at low risk of HIV acquisition if there is a plan to breastfeed or there are concerns about loss to follow-up **(BIII).**

Antiretroviral Management of Infants With In Utero, *Intrapartum or Breastfeeding Exposure or HIV Infection*

- This section has been extensively revised and the title has been updated to reflect changes in recommendations, associated content about infant ARV management according to risk from *in utero* and intrapartum HIV exposure, and guidance for infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding.
- The Panels have added Table 12. Transmission Risk Assessment by HIV RNA Levels and Antenatal Time Period, which summarizes risk of transmission from exposure during three antenatal time periods. Because robust data are not available to define thresholds of risk across pregnancy, the Panels have selected time points balancing available data with implications for clinical management. Transmission risk categories inform ARV choice and management of prophylaxis and presumptive HIV therapy for infants with HIV exposure.
- Revised criteria for infant risk of HIV infection from *in utero* or intrapartum exposure and recommended ARV management are summarized in Figure 1. Antiretroviral Management Algorithm for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum HIV Exposure by Risk of Transmission and Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV. The Panels recommend the following:
    - Viremia (HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL) in the 4 weeks prior to delivery puts infants at higher risk of HIV infection from *in utero* or intrapartum exposure. Infants in this category should be provided a three-drug ARV regimen, administered from birth for 2 to 6 weeks, that serves as presumptive HIV therapy or enhanced prophylaxis. If the duration of the three-drug regimen is shorter than 6 weeks, zidovudine (ZDV) should be continued alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis **(AII).**
    - HIV RNA levels <50 copies/ml from 20 weeks of gestation through delivery put infants at low risk of *in utero* and intrapartum HIV acquisition. These infants should receive ZDV alone for a duration of 2 weeks **(AII).**
    - Infants not meeting the criteria for high or low risk should have ARV regimens and durations based on case-specific factors related to the level and timing of viremia during the pregnancy **(AII).**

- The section now includes updated recommendations and expanded content about ARV prophylaxis for infants who are being breastfed. Recommendations of the Panels are summarized in a new table, Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding.
  - For infants with low risk of HIV acquisition during breastfeeding, some Panel members do not recommend extended ARV prophylaxis; however, other Panel members do recommend extended ARV prophylaxis with either nevirapine or 3TC **(CIII).** The Panels did not reach consensus.
  - Infants are considered at low risk of transmission during breastfeeding when (1) the breastfeeding woman is receiving ART and has had sustained virologic suppression (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 3 months prior to delivery and (2) the provider and parent are confident that the breastfeeding woman will maintain ART adherence during breastfeeding **(AII).**
  - Bulleted recommendations and associated content have been added to provide guidance about infant ARV prophylaxis or use of presumptive HIV therapy when the breastfeeding woman experiences new viremia or there are concerns about future risk of viremia.
  - Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed has been revised to provide updated dosing information and to address infant ARV management for scenarios when a breastfeeding woman develops viremia or is diagnosed with HIV during breastfeeding.

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Introduction

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The *Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Pediatric HIV Infection* (Pediatric Guidelines) address the diagnosis of HIV infection in infants and children and the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in children with HIV, including adolescents with sexual maturity ratings (SMRs; formerly Tanner Staging) 1 to 3. Note that the *Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents With HIV*, developed by the Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, are suitable for the care and management of adolescents in late puberty (SMRs 4–5).

The Pediatric Guidelines also include recommendations for managing adverse events that are associated with the use of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in children and a detailed review of information about the safety, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics (PK) of ARV agents in children. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel), a working group of the Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council, reviews new data on an ongoing basis and regularly updates the guidelines. The guidelines are available on the Clinicalinfo website. These guidelines are developed for the United States and may not be applicable in other countries. The World Health Organization provides guidelines for resource-limited settings.

The Pediatric Guidelines and the Perinatal Guidelines contain some closely related content that can overlap. To ensure that information is consistent across the guidelines and that users can easily find the information they need, the Panels that publish these two sets of guidelines have developed a process to jointly produce sections for shared content areas. The development of these sections is led by a group composed of members from both Panels; the sections are discussed separately and voted on by each full Panel. Jointly produced sections include—

- Pregnancy and Postpartum HIV Testing and Identification of Perinatal and Postnatal HIV Exposure
- Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children
- Antiretroviral Management of Infants With In Utero, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV
- Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding

Since the guidelines were first developed in 1993 (with the support of the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center, Rutgers School of Nursing, The State University of New Jersey), advances in medical management have dramatically reduced both the number of new pediatric HIV infections and the morbidity and mortality in children with HIV in the United States. The widespread use of ARV drugs in people with HIV during pregnancy and the use of ARV prophylaxis in infants who have been exposed to HIV have reduced the annual rate of perinatally acquired HIV infection[1,2] from a peak of 43.1 per 100,000 births in 1992 to 1.0 per 100,000 births in 2020. Racial and ethnic disparities are evident in annual rates of new perinatal infection; in 2020, perinatal infections occurred in Black or African American infants (3.8 per 100,000 births) at annual rates of 4 and 13 times those of Hispanic/Latinx infants (0.9 per 100,000 births) and White infants (0.3 per 100,000 births), respectively.[1] Since the introduction of ART, mortality in children with perinatal HIV infection has decreased by about 90%, and the incidence of opportunistic infections and other infections in these

children has significantly declined.[3,4] ARV drug-resistance testing has made it easier for clinicians to choose effective initial and subsequent regimens. Treatment strategies focus on early initiation of potent ARV regimens that are capable of maximally suppressing viral replication, which can prevent disease progression, preserve or restore immunologic function, reduce the size of viral reservoirs, and prevent the development of drug resistance.[5,6] In addition, the availability of new drugs and drug formulations has led to more potent regimens with lower toxicity, lower pill burden, and less frequent medication administration—all factors that can improve adherence and outcomes. However, delays in the development and testing of pediatric formulations continue to limit the availability of optimal ARV regimens for children, especially infants.[7]

Children with HIV in the United States are increasingly born outside the United States[8]; they may be members of immigrant families or they may have been adopted by U.S. residents. These children may have non-B subtypes of HIV, incomplete medical and treatment histories, an increased risk of tuberculosis and other infections that are endemic in their countries of origin, and legal and psychosocial needs related to immigration.[9,10]

Finally, as children with HIV grow older, new challenges arise related to adherence, drug resistance, reproductive health planning, transition to adult medical care, and the potential for long-term complications from HIV and its treatments.[11-13]

The pathogenesis of HIV infection and the virologic and immunologic principles underlying the use of ART are generally similar for all individuals with HIV. However, unique considerations exist for infants, children, and adolescents with HIV, including—

- Acquisition of infection through perinatal exposure for most children with HIV
- *In utero* and neonatal exposure to ARV drugs in most children with perinatal HIV infection[14]
- The need to use HIV virologic tests to diagnose perinatal HIV infection in infants younger than 18 months
- Age-specific interpretations of CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts
- Higher plasma viral loads in infants with perinatal HIV infection than in adolescents and adults with non-perinatal HIV infection
- Age-related changes in PK parameters that are caused by the continuing development and maturation of organ systems involved in drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and clearance[15]
- Differences in the clinical manifestations and treatment of HIV in growing, immunologically immature individuals
- Special considerations associated with adherence to ART in infants, children, and adolescents

The care of children with HIV is complex and evolves as results of new research are reported, new ARV drugs are approved, and new approaches to treatment are recommended. As new drugs become available, a critical need exists for clinical trials that define appropriate drug doses and identify possible toxicities in infants, children, and adolescents. As additional ARV drugs are approved and optimal strategies for the use of these drugs in children become better understood, the Panel will modify these guidelines.

The recommendations in these guidelines are based on the current state of knowledge regarding the use of ARV drugs in children. Evidence is drawn primarily from published data regarding the treatment of HIV in infants, children, adolescents, and adults; however, when no such data are

available, unpublished data and the clinical expertise of Panel members are also considered. These guidelines are only a starting point for medical decision-making and are not meant to supersede the judgment of clinicians who are experienced in the care of children with HIV. Because of the complexity of caring for children with HIV, health care providers with limited experience in the care of these patients should consult a pediatric HIV specialist. The HIV/AIDS Management Clinician Consultation Center is an excellent resource for telephone consultation. The Center can be contacted at 1-800-933-3413, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.

Table 1. Outline of the Guidelines Development Process

Topic	Comment
Goal of the Guidelines	The guidelines provide guidance to HIV care practitioners in the United States on the optimal use of antiretroviral (ARV) agents when treating infants, children, and adolescents in early to mid-puberty (sexual maturity rating [SMR] 1–3) with HIV.
Panel Members	The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) is composed of approximately 30 voting members who have expertise in the management of HIV infection in infants, children, and adolescents. Members include representatives from the Committee on Pediatric AIDS of the American Academy of Pediatrics and community representatives with knowledge of pediatric HIV infection (e.g., parents and caregivers of children and youth with HIV). The Panel also includes at least one representative from each of the following U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). A representative from the Canadian Paediatric and Perinatal HIV/AIDS Research Group and a representative from the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and Sexual Health Medicine participate as nonvoting, *ex officio* members of the Panel. The U.S. government representatives are appointed by their respective agencies; nongovernmental members are selected after an open announcement to call for nominations. Each member serves on the Panel for a 3-year term with an option for reappointment. A list of current members can be found in the Guidelines Panel Members.
Financial Disclosure	All members of the Panel submit an annual financial disclosure statement in writing, reporting any association with manufacturers of ARV drugs or diagnostics used to manage HIV infections. A list of the latest disclosures is available on the Clinicalinfo website.
Users of the Guidelines	Providers of care to infants, children, and adolescents with HIV in the United States
Developer	Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV—a working group of the Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council (OARAC)
Funding Source	NIH Office of AIDS Research and HRSA
Evidence Collection	A standardized review of recent, relevant literature related to each section of the guidelines is performed by a technical assistance consultant (through funding from HRSA) and provided to individual Panel working groups. The recommendations generally are based on studies published in peer-reviewed journals. The Panel may occasionally use unpublished data to revise the guidelines, particularly when the new information relates to dosing or patient safety. These data come from presentations at major conferences or from the FDA and/or drug manufacturers.

Table 1. Outline of the Guidelines Development Process

Topic	Comment
Recommendation Grading	Described in Table 2
Method of Synthesizing Data	Each section of the guidelines is assigned to a small group of Panel members with expertise in the area of interest. The members synthesize the available data and propose recommendations to the Panel. The Panel discusses all proposals during monthly teleconferences. Proposals are modified based on Panel discussion and then distributed with ballots to all Panel members for concurrence and additional comments. If there are substantive comments or votes against approval, the recommended changes and areas of disagreement are brought back to the full Panel (by email or teleconference) for additional review, discussion, and further modification to reach a final version that is acceptable to all Panel members. The recommendations in these final versions represent endorsement from a consensus of members and are included in the guidelines as official Panel recommendations.
Other Guidelines	These guidelines focus on infants, children, and adolescents in early to mid-puberty (SMR 1–3) with HIV. Guidelines for the treatment of adolescents in late puberty (SMR 4–5) are provided by the Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Separate guidelines outline the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) during pregnancy and interventions to reduce perinatal HIV transmission, including interventions to prevent perinatal transmission (the Perinatal Guidelines); ART for adults and postpubertal adolescents with HIV; and ARV prophylaxis for those who experience occupational or nonoccupational exposure to HIV. These and other HIV guidelines are also available on the Clinicalinfo website.
Update Plan	The full Panel meets monthly by teleconference to review data that may warrant modification of the guidelines. Smaller working groups of Panel members hold additional teleconferences to review individual drug sections or other specific topics (e.g., What to Start: Initial Combination Antiretroviral Regimens for People With HIV). Updates may be prompted by new drug approvals (or new indications, formulations, or frequency of dosing), new safety or efficacy data, or other information that may have a significant impact on the clinical care of patients. In the event of significant new data that may affect patient safety, the Panel may issue a warning announcement and post accompanying recommendations on the Clinicalinfo website until the guidelines can be updated with appropriate changes. All sections of the guidelines are reviewed at least once a year, with updates as appropriate.
Public Comments	A 2-week public comment period follows the release of the updated guidelines on the Clinicalinfo website. The Panel reviews these comments to determine whether additional revisions to the guidelines are indicated. The public may also submit comments to the Panel at any time via the Contact Us webpage.

Basis for Recommendations

Recommendations in these guidelines are based on scientific evidence and expert opinion. Each recommendation includes a letter (**A**, **B**, or **C**) that represents the strength of the recommendation and a Roman numeral (**I**, **II**, or **III**) that represents the quality of the evidence that supports the recommendation.

When approving drugs for use in children, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration often extrapolates efficacy data from adult trials, in addition to using safety and PK data from studies in children.[16] Because of this, recommendations for use of ARV drugs in children often rely, in part, on data from clinical trials or studies in adults. Because the course of HIV disease and the effects of ARV drugs in pediatric and adult populations are expected to be similar enough to permit extrapolation of adult

efficacy data to pediatric patients, it is appropriate to base approval of ARV drugs for children on evidence from adequate and well-controlled investigations in adults if—

- Supplemental data exist on the PK of the drug in children, indicating that systemic exposure in adults is similar to that in children, *and*
- Studies are provided that directly support the safety of using the drug in pediatric patients.[17-19]

If a concern exists that concentration–response relationships might be different in children than in adults, then pediatric drug approval should include evidence from studies that relate drug activity to drug levels (pharmacodynamic data) in children. In many cases, the evidence from studies on the use of ARV drugs in adults (especially from randomized clinical trials) is much more substantial and higher in quality than the available evidence from studies in children. Therefore, for pediatric recommendations, the following rationale has been used when the evidence from studies in children is limited or of lower quality:

Quality of Evidence Rating I—Randomized Clinical Trial Data

- Quality of Evidence Rating I will be used if there are data from large, randomized trials **in children** with clinical and/or validated laboratory endpoints.
- Quality of Evidence Rating I* will be used if there are high-quality randomized clinical trial data **in adults** with clinical and/or validated laboratory endpoints **and** pediatric data from well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with clinical outcomes that are consistent with the adult studies. A rating of I* may be used for quality of evidence if, for example, a randomized Phase 3 clinical trial in adults demonstrates that a drug is effective in ARV-naive patients, and data from a nonrandomized pediatric trial demonstrate adequate and consistent safety and PK data in the pediatric population.

Quality of Evidence Rating II—Nonrandomized Clinical Trials or Observational Cohort Data

- Quality of Evidence Rating II will be used if there are data from well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohorts **in children.**
- Quality of Evidence Rating II* will be used if there are well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies **in adults** with supporting and consistent information from smaller, nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data in children. A rating of II* may be used for quality of evidence if, for example, a large observational study in adults demonstrates a clinical benefit to initiating treatment at a certain CD4 count, and data from smaller observational studies in children indicate that treatment initiation at a similar CD4 count is associated with clinical benefit.

Quality of Evidence Rating III—Expert Opinion

- The criteria do not differ for adults and children.

In an effort to improve the quality of evidence available to guide the management of HIV infection in children, clinicians are encouraged to discuss participation in trials with children and their caregivers. Information about clinical trials for adults and children with HIV can be obtained from the Clinicalinfo website or by telephone at 1-800-448-0440.

Table 2. Rating Scheme for Recommendations

Strength of Recommendation	Quality of Evidence for Recommendation
A: Strong recommendation for the statement B: Moderate recommendation for the statement C: Optional recommendation for the statement	I: One or more randomized trials **in children**[a] with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints I*: One or more randomized trials **in adults** with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints, plus accompanying data **in children**[a] from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with clinical outcomes II: One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies **in children**[a] with clinical outcomes II*: One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies **in adults** with clinical outcomes, plus accompanying data **in children**[a] from one or more smaller nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data III: Expert opinion

[a] These studies include children or children and adolescents but not studies that are limited to postpubertal adolescents.

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Pregnancy and Postpartum HIV Testing and Identification of Perinatal and Postnatal HIV Exposure

Updated: May 19, 2025
Reviewed: May 19, 2025

Panel's Recommendations

- HIV testing is recommended for all sexually active people and should be a routine component of pre-pregnancy care (AII).
- For all pregnancies, opt-out HIV testing should be done as early as possible during each pregnancy (see Laboratory Testing for the Diagnosis of HIV Infection: Updated Recommendations and 2018 Quick Reference Guide: Recommended Laboratory HIV Testing Algorithm for Serum or Plasma Specimens from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]) (AII).
- For all pregnancies, partners should be referred for HIV testing when their status is unknown (AIII).
- Repeat HIV testing in the third trimester is recommended during pregnancies in which there are negative initial HIV tests and increased risk of acquiring HIV, including pregnancies in which the care is received in facilities that have an HIV incidence of ≥1 case per 1,000 patients experiencing pregnancy per year, those who reside in jurisdictions (states or counties) with elevated HIV incidence among females aged 15 to 45 years (>17 per 100,000 females aged 15–45 years), or those who reside in states or territories that require third-trimester testing (AII). Annual state and county-level HIV diagnosis rates are available at CDC's National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Tuberculosis Prevention AtlasPlus webpage.
- Repeat HIV testing is recommended when there is a sexually transmitted infection during pregnancy, when there are signs and symptoms of acute HIV infection, or when there is ongoing exposure to HIV (AIII). Initiation of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is recommended if HIV testing is negative (AIII). See Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Prevent HIV During Periconception, Antepartum, and Postpartum Periods for more information.
- Expedited[a] HIV testing should be performed during labor or after delivery when HIV status is undocumented as well as when HIV tests were negative early in pregnancy but there is increased risk of HIV infection and there was no retest in the third trimester (AII). HIV antigen/antibody testing should be available 24 hours a day, and results should be available within 1 hour. If results of expedited[a] HIV testing are positive, intrapartum intravenous zidovudine prophylaxis should be initiated immediately (AI); see Intrapartum HIV Care.
- When acute HIV infection is suspected during pregnancy or the intrapartum period or while breastfeeding, a plasma HIV RNA assay should be performed in conjunction with an antigen/antibody immunoassay (AIII).
- When there is a positive HIV test result during labor and delivery or postpartum, a maternal HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay and an HIV RNA assay should be performed (AI). In these situations, an HIV nucleic acid test (NAT) should be performed on the infant, with immediate initiation of presumptive HIV therapy appropriate for an infant at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission (AI); see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children for additional information.
- If maternal HIV test results are unavailable at birth, the newborn should be tested using an expedited[a] antibody test to identify perinatal HIV exposure (AI). If positive, an HIV NAT should be performed on the infant, and standard maternal HIV diagnostic testing should be offered as soon as possible (AI).
    - In this situation, presumptive HIV therapy appropriate for infants who are at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission should be initiated immediately (AI). See Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for guidance.
    - When there is an initial positive HIV test during labor or delivery or immediately postpartum and there are plans to breastfeed, the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission recommends against breastfeeding. Breast milk should be expressed and stored appropriately until all supplemental HIV tests are reviewed and are negative (AI).

- When there is increased risk of HIV acquisition postpartum, HIV testing and PrEP should be offered. If breastfeeding is occurring, consult an HIV specialist regarding frequency of HIV testing for the breastfeeding dyad (AIII).
- Maternal HIV test results should be documented in the newborn's medical record and communicated to the newborn's primary care provider (AIII).
- To identify perinatal HIV exposure and possible HIV infection, HIV testing is recommended for infants and children in foster care and adoptees for whom maternal HIV status is unknown (AIII) (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children).

[a] The term "expedited" is used to designate HIV testing performed in situations when a very short turnaround time is optimal. Expedited testing is dependent on the available HIV tests in each facility and may include antigen/antibody immunoassays or antibody-only assays; see Approved HIV Tests in the text below.

Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional

Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children[†] with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children[†] from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children[†] with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children[†] from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion*

[†]Studies that include children or children and adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents

Incident HIV infection during pregnancy, postpartum, or breastfeeding represents a period of high viremia and significantly increased risk of infant HIV acquisition. Similarly, entering pregnancy without knowledge of HIV infection also presents a high risk of perinatal transmission. This section addresses HIV testing in pregnancy, during labor and delivery, and postpartum. The section also addresses HIV testing to identify HIV perinatal and postnatal exposure in infants. For guidance on diagnosis of HIV in infants and children, see Diagnosis of HIV in Infants and Children.

Approved HIV Tests and Recommended HIV Testing Algorithm

There are multiple U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved tests available for the diagnosis of HIV infection. Clinicians should familiarize themselves with the testing available at their facilities, including the turnaround time for receiving results and test performance characteristics (e.g. sensitivity, specificity). For the purposes of this section, three types of testing are discussed: antigen/antibody immunoassays; antibody-only immunoassays; and HIV nucleic acid tests (NATs).

- Antigen/antibody immunoassays: Most routine laboratory testing for HIV currently uses antigen/antibody tests. Because these tests also detect HIV p24 antigen, they can detect acute HIV infection as early as 1 to 2 weeks after appearance of HIV RNA and before appearance of HIV antibody. These tests also detect HIV-2 infection. Laboratory-based tests require trained laboratory staff, and results can be available within 1 hour, but in some hospitals the test may not be readily available 24 hours a day. One FDA-approved antigen/antibody test can be performed at the point of care (POC), provides results after 20 minutes, and must be read before 30 minutes. Using timed seroconversion panels, this POC antigen/antibody test has been shown to detect HIV infection just 1 day later than laboratory-based antigen/antibody tests. However, it has lower specificity than laboratory-based antigen/antibody tests; therefore, false positive results are more likely than with laboratory-based tests.[1]
- Antibody-only immunoassays: Many antibody-only immunoassays in current use can be performed using blood from a finger stick or oral fluid and provide results within 30 minutes. Because of this very short turnaround time, they are often referred to as rapid tests. Many of these

tests are also approved by the FDA for POC usage. Because these tests detect only antibody, acute HIV infection may be missed.

- HIV NAT: HIV-1 NAT detects HIV viral nucleic acid in blood. Depending on the type of HIV NAT, it may detect acute HIV infection, help diagnose HIV infection, and assess response to HIV therapy. Different laboratories may have varying turnaround times for HIV NAT; some require several days before results are available.
- In this section, the term expedited is used to designate testing performed in situations when a very short turnaround time is optimal, such as when HIV status is undocumented during labor. Expedited testing should be available in all delivery units 24 hours a day, and results should be available within 1 hour. Expedited testing is dependent on the available HIV tests in each facility and may include any of the three test types. In a setting with low HIV prevalence and/or frequent testing, false positive initial test results will be common. Expedited and/or concurrent NAT can be helpful in managing an initial positive HIV test result. An HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay may be helpful if an antibody response has been mounted.

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV and the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Interventions to Reduce Perinatal HIV Transmission (the Panels) **recommend that clinicians initiate HIV testing with an immunoassay that can detect HIV-1 antibodies, HIV-2 antibodies, and HIV-1 p24 antigen (referred to as an HIV antigen/antibody immunoassay).** The Panels' recommendations for HIV testing are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) 2014 Laboratory Testing for the Diagnosis of HIV Infection: Updated Recommendations.[2]

Individuals with a reactive antigen/antibody immunoassay should be tested further with an **HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay (referred to as supplemental testing).** Individuals with a reactive antigen/antibody immunoassay and a nonreactive differentiation test should be tested with an FDA-approved plasma HIV RNA assay to assess for acute HIV infection (see the CDC's 2018 Quick Reference Guide: Recommended Laboratory HIV Testing Algorithm for Serum or Plasma Specimens).

In some clinical settings, initial testing may be conducted with a **rapid HIV test,** which may detect a combination of antigen and antibodies or only HIV antibodies. Positive results on POC rapid tests should be followed first by a laboratory-based antigen/antibody assay using serum or plasma and when reactive, followed by a differentiation assay.[3]

Clinicians should assess risk of acute HIV infection during pregnancy, particularly late in pregnancy, because there may be a negative result for HIV immunoassays during the window period (the time between infection and when the infection can be detected by a specific laboratory test). The antigen/antibody immunoassay may detect infection as early as 18 days after infection; antibody-only assays may not detect infection until as long as 45 days post-infection. However, during this period, the person with acute HIV will be viremic,[4] with a high risk of perinatal transmission. The HIV RNA assay can detect the presence of HIV as early as 10 days post-infection. **When acute HIV infection is suspected** during pregnancy, during the intrapartum period, or while breastfeeding, **a plasma HIV RNA assay should be performed in conjunction with an antigen/antibody immunoassay.** See Early (Acute and Recent) HIV Infection for more information.

Discordant or False Positive HIV Test Results

Discordant HIV testing results can occur, requiring careful evaluation and often repeat tests. Early in HIV infection, before HIV seroconversion, the test combination of a positive antigen/antibody

screen, negative HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay, and positive HIV RNA assay may be seen. This combination of results can occur because the immunoglobulin G–based antibody differentiation assay is positive later in infection than the antigen capture or the immunoglobulin M result in the antigen/antibody screen.

False positive results do occur with HIV testing. The frequency of false positive HIV testing is dependent both on the specificity of the assay and the prevalence of HIV in the population, so frequency may vary considerably. In a large urban hospital in Dallas, 21,163 women were screened using a combination antigen/antibody immunoassay. Reactive initial screens were followed by supplemental testing recommended by the CDC algorithm. Of the 190 who tested positive, 28 were determined to have a false positive HIV test, yielding a positive predictive value of 83% (95% confidence interval [CI], 77% to 88%) and a false positive rate of 0.16% (95% CI, 0.11% to 0.22%), using the ARCHITECT HIV Ag/Ab assay.[5] For women screened a second time in pregnancy, the rate of false positive results relative to true positive results may be higher, as it depends on the community risk of HIV acquisition over a short time period (i.e., the 6 months between first- and third-trimester testing).

For any positive HIV screen late in pregnancy, during labor, or immediately postpartum, an HIV RNA assay should be done at the same time as the supplemental HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay. The HIV RNA assay will be needed to resolve questions raised by discordant results between the antigen/antibody screen and the antibody differentiation assay.

The combination of a positive HIV antigen/antibody screen with a negative supplemental HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay and a negative HIV RNA assay is seen when there is a false positive antigen/antibody screen.

Timing and Benefits of HIV Testing Prior to Conception or During Pregnancy

HIV infection should be identified before pregnancy (see Prepregnancy Counseling and Care) or as early as possible in pregnancy. In the United States, approximately 20% to 34% of infants with perinatal HIV exposure were born to mothers whose HIV diagnosis was not known before pregnancy.[6] Early diagnosis provides the best opportunity to improve maternal health and pregnancy outcomes and to prevent infant acquisition of HIV. Universal voluntary HIV testing is recommended as the standard of care during all pregnancies in the United States by the Panels, CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.[7-11] HIV testing should be performed during pregnancy wherever care is provided (including emergency departments and prenatal clinics) to avoid missed opportunities to identify HIV infection. Repeat HIV testing should be performed in the third trimester when there is increased risk of acquiring HIV or when living in areas of high HIV incidence. Repeat testing is also recommended when a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is diagnosed during pregnancy, or when symptoms and signs of acute HIV infection are present. When HIV status is unknown or undocumented during labor, providers should test for HIV before delivery or as soon as possible after delivery.[12-15] Because women are more susceptible to HIV acquisition during pregnancy and the postpartum period, HIV testing provides an opportunity for clinicians to initiate a discussion about preventive interventions, including educating and counseling about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) when there is risk for acquiring HIV during pregnancy. See Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Prevent HIV During Periconception, Antepartum, and Postpartum Periods and guidance available on CDC's Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) webpage for more information.

Determining HIV status before pregnancy or during the antenatal period enables:

- Provision of appropriate antiretroviral therapy (ART) and prophylaxis against opportunistic infections;
- Initiation of treatment to maintain and improve health and to decrease risk of perinatal HIV transmission and transmission to partners[7,17,18];
- Referral of partners for testing, providing an opportunity for treatment initiation by partners testing positive, PrEP initiation by serodifferent partners testing negative, and counseling on other preventive measures (see Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Prevent HIV During Periconception, Antepartum, and Postpartum Periods);
- Counseling during pregnancy and HIV care about recommended modes of delivery based on individualized risks of perinatal transmission of HIV[19-21];
- Provision of an appropriate antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis regimen to the newborn to reduce risk of infant HIV acquisition (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV);
- Shared decision-making on infant feeding choice, specifically breastfeeding or use of replacement feeding (see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding); *and*
- Early diagnostic evaluation of infants exposed to HIV, as well as testing of other children, to permit prompt initiation of ART and any indicated prophylaxis measures (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children, Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV, and Table 6. What to Start: Initial Antiretroviral Regimens During Pregnancy When Antiretroviral Therapy Has Never Been Received).[8,22,23]

Finally, all HIV testing should be performed in a manner that is consistent with state and local regulations. The CDC recommends the "opt-out" approach, which is allowed in many jurisdictions and involves notification that HIV testing will be performed as part of routine pregnancy care unless the choice is made not to be tested.[7] The "opt-in" approach involves obtaining specific consent before testing, and this approach has been associated with lower testing rates.[24,25] Despite the guidelines for universal HIV screening during pregnancy, recent studies indicate that fewer than 80% of women report having been tested for HIV during pregnancy.[26,27] The mandatory newborn HIV testing approach, which has been adopted by several states, involves testing newborns with or without parental consent. In some areas, this applies to all newborns; in others, it applies only when prenatal or intrapartum maternal testing has been declined.

Repeat HIV Testing in the Third Trimester

Repeat HIV testing during the third trimester, before 36 weeks of gestation, is recommended when there were negative results on the initial HIV tests during pregnancy and:

- There is high risk of acquiring HIV (i.e., injection drug use or sex with people who inject drugs, exchange of sex for money or drugs, sex partner with HIV who has a detectable or unknown HIV viral load, new sex partner or more than one sex partner during the current pregnancy,[7] suspected or diagnosed STI during pregnancy,[10] recent immigration from a high-burden HIV setting, partner who either recently immigrated from a high-burden HIV setting or recently traveled to such a setting); *or*
- Health care is being provided by facilities where prenatal screening identifies one or more HIV cases per 1,000 patients experiencing pregnancy screened or the jurisdiction of residence (state or county) has an elevated incidence rate of HIV in females aged 15 to 45 years. An annual HIV diagnosis rate ≥17 per 100,000 females aged 15 to 45 years can be used as a proxy for elevated

HIV incidence. Annual state- and county-level HIV diagnosis rates by age are available at the CDC's National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Tuberculosis Prevention AtlasPlus webpage[7,10]; *or*

- The states or territories of residence have statutes or regulations that require third-trimester HIV testing. In a 2020 article, these included Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.[28] State-level clinical guidelines may also recommend third-trimester HIV testing (e.g., New York). Clinicians should check current requirements and recommendations in their jurisdictions; *or*
- There are signs or symptoms of acute HIV (e.g., fever, lymphadenopathy, skin rash, myalgia, headaches, oral ulcers, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, elevated transaminase levels).[7,10,29,30]
- There is self-perception as being at increased risk for HIV infection (regardless of whether or not any of the above criteria apply). When testing is declined earlier in pregnancy, providers should offer testing again during the third trimester.

An antigen/antibody immunoassay should be used for third-trimester testing because these tests have a higher sensitivity in the setting of acute HIV infection than older antibody tests.[2,31] If acute HIV infection is suspected, a plasma HIV RNA assay should be performed in conjunction with an antigen/antibody immunoassay. See Early (Acute and Recent) HIV Infection for more information.

Providers should be proactive in assessing HIV acquisition risk during pregnancy and implementing third-trimester HIV retesting when indicated. A study in Baltimore found that only 28% of women were retested for HIV despite the high incidence of HIV in Maryland and a high frequency of clinical risk factors.[15] A study of data from 2007 to 2014 on children in Florida with perinatal HIV exposure found that perinatal HIV transmission was associated with poor or late prenatal care, diagnosis of HIV during labor and delivery or after birth, and, in some cases, acute maternal infection (as indicated by negative results for initial tests).[32]

When determining the timing of repeat HIV testing in the third trimester, some clinicians conduct testing at or around 28 weeks of gestation in conjunction with the recommended timing of syphilis testing. This approach limits the number of blood draws and allows adequate time for syphilis treatment and congenital syphilis prophylaxis. Some clinicians also conduct a third test for HIV at the time of delivery hospitalization admission.

HIV Testing During Labor When HIV Status Is Unknown

When HIV status is undocumented during labor or HIV testing was negative early in pregnancy but there is an increased risk of HIV infection and there was no retesting in the third trimester, expedited HIV testing should be performed.[7-9,22,33,34]

- Perform an expedited HIV test—either an antigen/antibody immunoassay that can provide results within 1 hour or the most sensitive rapid test (includes rapid POC tests) available during labor. An HIV RNA assay should also be performed when there is suspected acute HIV infection. In a setting with low prevalence and/or frequent testing, false positive initial test results will be common. Expedited and/or concurrent NATs can be helpful in managing an initial positive HIV test result.[35]
- If the initial HIV test result is negative (nonreactive), no further testing is required unless acute HIV infection is suspected (see Acute HIV Infection During Pregnancy or Breastfeeding below).[2]

- A positive antigen/antibody immunoassay or rapid HIV test result must be immediately followed by a supplemental HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay, as well as a maternal HIV RNA assay and an HIV NAT for the infant.[2] If possible, contact the laboratory to prioritize results.
- For delivery units, every effort should be made to have the ability to run a confirmatory supplemental test (HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation assay) 7 days a week. If possible, results of HIV RNA assays should be available in 24 hours or less.
- When there is a positive HIV test result or suspected acute HIV infection during labor, provide counseling about HIV test results and implications for care.
    - Initiate intravenous zidovudine during labor (see Intrapartum HIV Care).
    - Immediately initiate presumptive HIV therapy appropriate for infants who are at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV or contact the National Clinician Consultation Center Perinatal HIV/AIDS hotline).
    - When there are plans to breastfeed, the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission strongly advises against initiating breastfeeding given the high risk of perinatal transmission. Breast milk should be expressed and stored appropriately; it should not be used for infant feeding unless all supplemental HIV test results are reviewed and determined to be negative (see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding).

HIV Testing During the Postpartum Period

When there has been no testing for HIV during pregnancy or labor, expedited testing during the immediate postpartum period should be offered. Postpartum HIV testing should be done using the antigen/antibody immunoassay to screen for established and acute HIV; results should be obtained in <1 hour. If acute HIV infection is a possibility, then a plasma HIV RNA test should be sent as well.

When HIV testing is requested postpartum or there is increased risk of HIV acquisition (e.g., injection drug use or sex with people who inject drugs, exchange of sex for money or drugs, sex partner with HIV who has a detectable or unknown HIV viral load, new sex partner or more than one sex partner during the current pregnancy,[7] suspected or diagnosed STI during pregnancy,[10] recent immigration from a high-burden HIV setting, partner that either recently immigrated from a high-burden HIV setting or recently traveled to such a setting) HIV testing and PrEP should be offered. See Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Prevent HIV During Periconception, Antepartum, and Postpartum Periods for more information. If breastfeeding is occurring, consult an HIV specialist regarding frequency of HIV testing in the breastfeeding dyad.

When an initial maternal or infant HIV test is positive or there is high suspicion of acute HIV infection, it is strongly recommended that clinicians initiate presumptive HIV therapy appropriate for infants who are at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission, ideally ≤6 hours after birth (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Providers should counsel against breastfeeding pending the results of supplemental testing, which should include a plasma HIV RNA assay. Breast milk can be expressed while HIV diagnostic testing is being completed, but it should not be given to the infant until HIV negative maternal testing is confirmed. If supplemental test results are negative and acute HIV is excluded, infant ARV drugs can be discontinued. In the absence of ongoing HIV exposure, breastfeeding can be initiated. Consultation with a pediatric HIV specialist is strongly recommended if questions remain about the potential for acute infection while lactating or ongoing infant risk of HIV exposure.

Infant HIV Testing When Maternal HIV Test Results Are Unavailable

When maternal HIV test results are unavailable (e.g., testing declined during pregnancy, infant or child is in foster care) or their accuracy cannot be evaluated (e.g., for internationally adopted infants and children), HIV testing of these infants or children is indicated to identify HIV exposure and possible infection.[8] If maternal HIV test results are unavailable, the infant should be tested using an expedited antibody test to identify perinatal HIV exposure. If positive, an HIV NAT should be performed on the infant, presumptive HIV therapy appropriate for infants at high risk for perinatal HIV transmission should be initiated immediately (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for guidance), and standard maternal HIV diagnostic testing should be offered as soon as possible. For older infants and children, the choice of test will vary based on the age of the child (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children).

Acute HIV Infection During Pregnancy or Breastfeeding

Pregnancy and the early postpartum period are times of increased risk for HIV infection.[36] Risk of HIV exposure should be assessed when considering becoming pregnant, during all pregnancies and postpartum periods when there have been previous negative HIV tests, and when breastfeeding. When there are risk factors for HIV acquisition before, during, and after pregnancy, prevention counseling and appropriate interventions should be provided, including PrEP if indicated[36,37] (see Prepregnancy Counseling and Care and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis [PrEP] to Prevent HIV During Periconception, Antepartum, and Postpartum Periods for more information). When there is acute HIV during pregnancy or lactation, there is an increased risk of perinatal transmission; acute HIV also increase risk for sexual transmission of HIV (see Early [Acute and Recent] HIV Infection). The antigen/antibody immunoassay will detect acute HIV infection earlier than other immunoassays—within approximately 18 days of acquisition. When acute HIV infection is suspected, a plasma HIV RNA test should be sent as well as the antigen/antibody test, because virologic tests can detect the presence of HIV approximately 5 days earlier than the antigen/antibody immunoassay. When acute HIV infection is possible and breastfeeding is ongoing, counsel about the Panel's recommendation to cease breastfeeding immediately until HIV infection is confirmed or excluded.[38] Breast milk can be expressed and stored appropriately while HIV diagnostic testing is completed. Expressed breast milk should not be used for infant feeding until all supplemental HIV test results are reviewed and determined to be negative. Breastfeeding can resume if HIV infection is excluded and there is no ongoing risk. Care during pregnancy or breastfeeding for the breastfeeding dyad when there is acute or early HIV should follow the recommendations in the Perinatal Guidelines (see Early [Acute and Recent] HIV Infection, Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV, and Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding).

Other Issues

Clinicians should be aware of public health surveillance systems and regulations that may exist in their jurisdictions for reporting infants who have been exposed to HIV; this is in addition to mandatory reporting of confirmed HIV, including infants with confirmed HIV. Reporting infants who have been exposed to HIV allows the appropriate public health functions to be accomplished.

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Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding

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Panel's Recommendations
• When there is potential for perinatal HIV transmission, evidence-based, patient-centered counseling should be provided to support shared decision-making about infant feeding. Counseling about infant feeding should begin prior to conception or as early as possible in pregnancy; information about and plans for infant feeding should be reviewed throughout pregnancy and again after delivery (AIII). During counseling, inform that— o Replacement feeding with properly prepared formula or pasteurized donor human milk from a milk bank eliminates the risk of postnatal HIV transmission to the infant through breastfeeding. o Achieving and maintaining viral suppression through antiretroviral therapy (ART) during pregnancy and postpartum decreases breastfeeding transmission risk to less than 1%, but not zero. • Replacement feeding with formula or banked pasteurized donor human milk is recommended to eliminate the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding when ART is not being taken and/or viral suppression has not been achieved during pregnancy (at a minimum throughout the third trimester), as well as at delivery (AI). • When ART is being taken for HIV and a sustained undetectable viral load is achieved, counseling about the options of formula feeding, use of banked donor milk, or breastfeeding should be provided. Those who choose to breastfeed should be supported in this decision (AIII). • If formula feeding is chosen, providers should support in this decision. Providers should ask about potential barriers to formula feeding and explore ways to address them (AIII). • In the case of a detectable viral load during breastfeeding, the Panel on Treatment of HIV in Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV recommend breastfeeding be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated while the viral load is rechecked, causes for the viremia are assessed, and, when applicable, adherence counseling is reinforced (AII) (see Situations to Consider Stopping or Modifying Breastfeeding in the text below). Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when HIV RNA is ≥200 copies/mL (CIII). o Depending on the level and persistence of viremia , next steps may include initiating or modifying infant antiretroviral prophylaxis, permanently stopping breastfeeding, and considering the need for additional infant HIV testing (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV, Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding, and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV in Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children). o If the repeat parental viral load is undetectable, a joint decision should be made by the parent and providers about whether breastfeeding may resume (AIII). • Engaging Child Protective Services or similar agencies is not an appropriate response to infant feeding choices impacted by HIV (AIII). • Clinicians are encouraged to consult the National Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8765) with HIV-related questions about infant feeding (AIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; III = Expert opinion*

Counseling about infant feeding is an integral component of HIV care during pregnancy and postpartum. Ideally, this counseling should begin before pregnancy, continue during pregnancy, and be reviewed again after delivery. Patient-centered counseling should assess opinions and plans about infant feeding, engage in shared decision-making, and assist in implementing plans for infant feeding. Previously, replacement feeding with properly prepared formula or banked, pasteurized donor human milk was recommended as the only option for infant feeding in the United States because it is generally available and eliminates any risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding. However, breastfeeding provides certain benefits to the breastfeeding dyad that are not possible with formula feeding. In addition, the risk of transmission through breastfeeding is very low, but not zero, for women on antiretroviral therapy (ART) with a sustained undetectable HIV viral load.[1-4]

The Panel on Treatment of HIV in Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panels) recommend that clinicians engage parents in patient-centered counseling and shared decision-making regarding infant feeding. In 2024, the American Academy of Pediatrics published an updated opinion on breastfeeding in the context of HIV, stating "pediatricians should be prepared to offer a family-centered, nonjudgmental, harm reduction approach to support people with HIV on ART with sustained viral suppression below 50 copies per mL who desire to breastfeed."[4] As part of this process, providers and parents should discuss both replacement feeding and breastfeeding and address the possible use of infant antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis during breastfeeding in addition to the ARV prophylaxis recommended for all infants with perinatal HIV exposure. These conversations need to take place during pregnancy as well as throughout the duration of breastfeeding, particularly if viral load becomes detectable (see Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding and Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Counseling should also address issues related to breast health (e.g., mastitis), mixed feeding, and weaning.

Panel recommendations are in line with the opinions of multiple experts and community organizations that have called for a patient-centered approach to infant feeding decision-making and providing access to the information, support, and tools parents need to make informed infant feeding decisions.[4-13] A 2016 survey of 93 clinicians in the United States who provide specialty care to women with HIV found that one-third of the providers were aware that women in their care breastfed their infants after being advised not to do so.[14] These findings underscore the importance of open communication and shared decision-making that provide an opportunity to understand patients' values and infant feeding preferences, thus allowing appropriate care and support for breastfeeding dyads.

Most of the data on HIV transmission via breast milk come from studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries. However, there is growing interest in breastfeeding by people with HIV and health care providers in the United States and other higher-income countries. Data about breastfeeding with HIV in these settings are limited but have been explored in a number of studies. A 2020 case series [15] described breastfeeding of three infants with perinatal HIV exposure in Canada. Eight observational studies published after that time have reported on groups of 7 to 72 breastfeeding infants estimated to reflect a total of 184 to 214 unique infants in Germany,[16,17] Italy,[18] Switzerland,[19] and the United States and Canada.[20-23] In these publications, participants who breastfed were on ART, generally started before or in the first trimester of pregnancy, and were documented to be virally suppressed (viral load <50 to <400 copies/mL) at the time of delivery and/or in late pregnancy. A few cases of low-level viremia were reported postpartum, with cessation of

breastfeeding in most instances. Infant ARV prophylaxis varied within and across study locations, including no ARV prophylaxis, zidovudine (ZDV) and/or nevirapine (NVP) for 4 to 6 weeks after birth, or continuing prophylaxis through one month after weaning. Some centers chose therapeutic dosing with three-drug ARV regimens for either the first 4 to 6 weeks after birth or through weaning. Although none of the studies identified cases of HIV transmission related to breastfeeding, the studies were not designed to evaluate transmission (see the subsection on Risk of Transmission below), the number of participating infants was small, and follow-up has not been completed for all participants. Some infants are still breastfeeding, and a small number were lost to follow-up. Challenges during breastfeeding—including mastitis, inadequate milk supply with need for formula supplementation, episodes of detectable viral load, and difficulty weaning—require further study to inform optimal management.

Clinicians who provide HIV care who have questions about infant feeding or are considering breastfeeding are encouraged to consult with an expert and/or the National Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

Overview of Counseling and Management

When ART for HIV is being taken with a consistently suppressed viral load during pregnancy (at a minimum during the third trimester) and at the time of delivery, the Panel recommends counseling about the options of formula feeding, banked donor milk, or breastfeeding and supporting in infant feeding decisions.

When ART is not being taken and/or a suppressed viral load is not achieved at delivery, replacement feeding with formula or banked pasteurized donor human milk is recommended to eliminate the risk of HIV transmission. However, it is important to recognize that accessing an adequate supply of formula may be difficult sometimes, and there may be cost and access barriers to obtaining donor milk. For anyone with HIV who chooses replacement feeding, systems of care should ensure supportive access to clean water, safe formula, and banked human milk, if available.

Other countries have updated their guidelines for management of breastfeeding in the context of HIV: Switzerland in 2018,[19] Australia in 2021,[24] the United Kingdom in 2020[10] and 2022,[25] and Canada in 2023.[26] A number of institutions in the United States have developed their own protocols for counseling and providing HIV care when there is an interest in breastfeeding.[20,27-29] Although these country guidelines and institution-level protocols have some differences, they all entail common elements: standardized counseling regarding infant feeding options during HIV care, a multidisciplinary team-based approach, lactation support, adherence counseling and support, and close monitoring of the breastfeeding dyad.[25] Approaches to infant prophylaxis are quite variable (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). In a provider survey conducted in 2021, institutional protocols supporting breastfeeding with HIV were rare but were associated with higher degrees of provider comfort when patients chose to breastfeed.[30]

Special Concerns

Engaging Child Protective Services or similar agencies is not an appropriate response to infant feeding choices impacted by HIV.

There have been numerous reports that after expressing interest in or intention to breastfeed, providers threatened to make a report to Child Protective Services or actually did so. Such engagements can be extremely harmful to families; can exacerbate the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV; and are disproportionately applied to minoritized individuals, including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.[31-33]

Other Considerations

Patients should be asked nonjudgmental questions about their self-expression, including how they want to be referred to as a parent (e.g., mother, father, another name), and how they want to describe infant feeding (e.g., breastfeeding, another name). Some patients may desire to feed their infants their own milk, although some may find it dysphoric.[34] Counseling about infant feeding options, as discussed in this section, should be provided to all pregnancies impacted by HIV. There are no evidence-based guidelines on timing of restarting testosterone after giving birth or while breastfeeding. In one published case report of restarting testosterone 13 months postpartum while still lactating, the calculated milk-to-plasma ratio was under 1.0, the calculated relative infant dose was under 1%, the infant had no observable side effects, and the infant serum testosterone concentrations remained undetectable.[35]

Approach to Counseling

Health care providers who provide HIV care during pregnancy or prepregnancy should initiate conversations about infant feeding early in pregnancy, or prior to the pregnancy, and the discussion should continue during the pregnancy.

One approach is to say, "Have you thought about how you would like to feed your baby? Formula feeding eliminates the risk of HIV transmission through breast milk. Less than 1 of 100 breastfed infants would be expected to acquire HIV through breast milk when ART is being taken and a sustained undetectable viral load is achieved while lactating; however, the risk is not zero. What information can I provide to help you decide?"

When breastfeeding with HIV is being considered, providers should engage in patient-centered, evidence-based counseling about infant feeding, allowing for shared decision-making. It should be a private, nonjudgmental conversation to understand the motivations for breastfeeding (e.g., bonding, health benefits for the breastfeeding dyad) and potential barriers to formula feeding (e.g., concern about formula feeding inadvertently disclosing HIV status, barriers to accessing formula, cultural concerns). Factors such as resource accessibility, the need for informed lactation support, and history of medication adherence should be considered when making these decisions. The conversation should also include information about the risks of HIV transmission during breastfeeding, the importance of sustained viral suppression, and common challenges to ART adherence during the postpartum period.

People with HIV desire to be counseled about safe infant feeding practices and have their questions answered without judgment.[27,36] Community-based organizations have developed patient-facing materials to assist decisions around infant feeding options during pregnancy.[37] When the choice is made to breastfeed, counseling should include the importance of adherence to ART, sustained viral suppression during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and engagement in postpartum care. Points to address are listed below:

- The infant feeding options that eliminate the risk of HIV transmission are formula and pasteurized donor human milk.
- Fully suppressive ART during pregnancy and breastfeeding decreases breastfeeding transmission risk to less than 1%, but not zero.
- When ART for HIV is being taken with a sustained undetectable viral load, counsel about the options of formula feeding, use of banked donor milk, or breastfeeding. Those who choose to breastfeed should be supported in this decision.
- For those who choose to breastfeed, exclusive breastfeeding (no formula or other foods) through the first 6 months is recommended. It is important to acknowledge that there may be intermittent need to give formula (e.g., infant weight loss, milk supply not yet established, not having enough stored milk, transient increases in viral load).
- The postpartum period, which can be difficult for all parents, can present several challenges to medication adherence and engagement in care. Ensuring that parents have access to both a supportive clinical team and peer support in the postpartum period is beneficial in promoting medication adherence and viral load monitoring (see Postpartum HIV Management and Follow-Up).
- Access to a provider who is a breastfeeding specialist certified by the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (when available) or a lactation consultant with expertise in supporting breastfeeding with HIV is beneficial.
- As most studies of breastfeeding in mothers with HIV were conducted in resource-limited settings, more information is needed about the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding in higher-resource settings and when adherent to ART with sustained viral suppression starting early in pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits such as reduction in hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and breast and ovarian cancers and benefits for the breastfed infant such reduction in asthma, gastroenteritis and otitis media,.[38]

Some providers and/or institutions have chosen to require a signed form acknowledging the counseling provided; others have felt this practice is too stigmatizing and prefer to document the infant feeding discussion in the patient's chart without requiring a signed form.

Approach to Management

If the decision is made to breastfeed, several measures should be taken to reduce the possibility of HIV transmission. Care of the breastfeeding dyad should be coordinated prior to delivery among the maternity care provider, HIV provider, infant provider, breastfeeding specialist certified by the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (when available), lactation consultant, and social worker, all of whom may need education about new approaches to infant feeding with HIV.[20,26-30] Recommendations for management include the following:

- Support ART adherence and engagement in care throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding.
    - Provide case management and/or social work support from individual(s) with perinatal support experience.

- Ensure continued access to ARV medications throughout the breastfeeding period, recognizing that patients may have changes to insurance status and may need support applying for assistance programs.
- Provide early active referral to a supportive lactation consultant, preferably a breastfeeding medicine provider when available, beginning prenatally or at delivery and continuing until breastfeeding is well established. The lactation consultant should be knowledgeable in concerns regarding HIV transmission and the situations in which to consider stopping or temporarily interrupting breastfeeding. (Refer to the next section on Situations in which to Consider Stopping or Modifying Breastfeeding.)
- Screen and provide support for postpartum depression and other mental health conditions that are highly prevalent after giving birth and may affect ART adherence. Postpartum depression occurs more frequently with HIV compared to without HIV[39] (see Postpartum HIV Management and Follow-Up).

- Document sustained viral suppression before delivery and throughout breastfeeding.
  - No data exist to inform the appropriate frequency of viral load testing while breastfeeding. One approach is to monitor the plasma viral load of the parent every 1 to 2 months during breastfeeding.[21,40]
  - Decide which clinician (e.g., prenatal care provider or primary care HIV clinician) is responsible for following viral loads of the parent postpartum and continuing counseling/education around breastfeeding.
  - If viral load becomes detectable, switching to replacement feeding is recommended (see Situations to Consider Stopping or Modifying Breastfeeding below). There are no data that clearly define a specific viral load threshold for permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding. Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when viral load is ≥200 copies/mL. Guidance about infant ARV management when viremia develops during breastfeeding is provided in Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Infants Exposed to Detectable HIV RNA During Breastfeeding in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV; see Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV or Exposure During Breastfeeding and Table 14.1 Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed.

- Recommend exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of life, followed by the introduction of complementary foods (e.g, solids) with continued breastfeeding, if desired.[38] Some parents may choose to stop breastfeeding and switch to formula prior to 6 months of age.
  - Provide support for exclusive breastfeeding, acknowledging that there may be scenarios where formula supplementation is needed. There is no evidence that formula supplementation increases the risk of HIV acquisition in the breastfed infant in the context of parental ART and viral suppression. In pre-ART studies, exclusive breastfeeding was associated with lower rates of HIV transmission compared to mixed feeding (a term used to describe infants fed breast milk plus other liquid or solid foods, including formula).[41,42] The highest risk in these studies was from very early introduction of solids (before 2 months of age).[41,43] Whether this remains a risk factor when viral suppression is sustained during breastfeeding has not been studied.
  - If supplementation is needed during a hospital stay, prioritize the use of pasteurized donor human milk when feasible.

- Administer appropriate ARV prophylaxis starting at birth; see Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Breastfeeding Infants, Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV or Exposure During Breastfeeding and Table 14.1 Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.
- If detectable viral load develops during breastfeeding, the Panels recommend that breastfeeding be temporarily stopped or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated. Additional infant ARV prophylaxis and infant testing are also recommended, see Situations to Consider Stopping or Modifying Breastfeeding, below, Table 14, Table 14.1, and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV
- Provide guidance on good breast care, including strategies to avoid and promptly resolve over-production of breast milk, milk stasis, and breast engorgement, which can lead to sore nipples, mastitis, or breast abscess. Promptly identify and treat mastitis, thrush, and cracked or bleeding nipples. These conditions may increase the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding, although the impact of these conditions in the context of ART and viral suppression is unknown.
- Develop a joint plan for weaning with family and providers. Since very rapid weaning was associated with increased risk of HIV shedding into breast milk and risk of transmission in the pre-ART era,[44-46] weaning over a 2- to 4-week period might be safer, paying special attention to good breast care and avoidance of breast engorgement and milk stasis.
- There is little evidence to guide the infant HIV testing schedule during breastfeeding, and there have been transmissions detected many weeks or even months after reported cessation of breastfeeding.[47] Information about HIV testing for infants who are being breastfed is available in Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children (see Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV).

Situations to Consider Stopping or Modifying Breastfeeding

Situations may arise in which there is a need to temporarily stop or discontinue breastfeeding and initiate replacement feeding, such as a detectable viral load or developing mastitis or bleeding nipples during breastfeeding. If the situation is temporary, some options to consider while expressing breast milk until the condition has resolved or viral load becomes undetectable include: (1) giving previously stored expressed milk from a date when viral suppression was achieved while encouraging pumping and discarding breast milk to ensure that breastfeeding can resume; (2) pumping and flash heating breast milk before feeding it to the infant; (3) providing replacement feeding with formula or pasteurized donor human milk while encouraging pumping and discarding breast milk to ensure that breastfeeding can resume; or (4) permanently stopping breastfeeding. Flash heating, which has been documented to eliminate HIV from breast milk, involves placing a sample of milk in a glass container within a small pot of water, heating the water to a boil, and immediately removing the milk from the heated water when the water has boiled.[48,49] Once cooled to room temperature, milk can be given to the infant via bottle or cup.

In the case of mastitis or bleeding nipples, pump and either flash heat or discard milk from the affected breast while continuing to feed or pump from the unaffected breast.

In the case of a viral load that becomes detectable while breastfeeding, the Panels recommend temporarily stopping or discontinuing breastfeeding and initiating replacement feeding, using one of the options described above, engaging in shared decision-making, assessing the etiology of the

viremia, and repeating the viral load. Due to the risk of postnatal transmission associated with viremia during breastfeeding, the Panels advise immediate cessation of breastfeeding if viral load becomes detectable; this guidance is more directive than counseling when ART is being taken with sustained viral suppression. Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when HIV RNA is ≥200 copies/mL. The exact association between degree and duration of viremia and lactational transmission is not known. In situations where viremia is low and an addressable cause has been identified, the added risk of short-term continued breastfeeding until a repeat viral load is available is likely to be low.

Any viremia is an opportunity to review the risks and benefits of continued breastfeeding, adherence strategies, and other considerations, such as ARV prophylaxis for the breastfeeding infant (see Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding and Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). If the repeat viral load is undetectable, a joint decision should be made by the parent and the clinician about whether breastfeeding may resume. If the repeat viral load remains detectable, support should be provided to continue replacement feeding.

The Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children section provides guidance about HIV diagnostic testing for infants who are being breastfed. If after counseling, the choice is made to continue to breastfeeding with viremia, the parent and provider should remain engaged; the provider should offer guidance on ARV prophylaxis and testing for the infant and assist the parent to rapidly regain and maintain virologic suppression. Consultation with an expert or the National Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8764) is recommended.

Infant HIV Infection

If an infant has a positive nucleic acid test (NAT) result, it should be confirmed with a repeat NAT as soon as possible (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children). Antigen–antibody combination immunoassays are not recommended for diagnosis in infants because of the transplacental transfer of HIV antibodies during pregnancy.

In the event of HIV transmission via breastfeeding, consult a pediatric HIV specialist and promptly initiate a full ART regimen for the infant (see What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV in the Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Pediatric HIV Infection). If an infant acquires HIV, breastfeeding may be continued. Drug-resistance testing should be done on the infant's viral isolate. If resistance is identified, the ARV regimen can be adjusted appropriately.

Factors Affecting Decisions About Infant Feeding

Several factors affect parents' decisions about infant feeding. Patient-centered counseling should be conducted in a manner that supports the family by sharing the risks and benefits of feeding options; listening to beliefs, values, and interests of parents; addressing concerns; and engaging in shared decision-making to identify and support each family's infant feeding decision.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

In general, breastfeeding is widely considered to be the healthiest infant feeding option for both parents and infants in the general population (see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Recommendations and Benefits: Breastfeeding). Breastfeeding is associated with improved neonatal immune status and a lower risk of infants developing asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, severe lower respiratory disease, otitis media, sudden infant death syndrome, gastrointestinal infections, and necrotizing enterocolitis. In addition to bonding with infants and avoiding the monetary costs of formula, benefits to breastfeeding include decreased risk of hypertension; type 2 diabetes; and breast, endometrial, and ovarian cancers.[38] An exclusive focus on the risk of perinatal HIV transmission via breastfeeding fails to acknowledge the health benefits of lactating and the health benefits that may be lost by prohibiting breastfeeding with HIV.

Access Considerations

Black women are disproportionately affected by HIV. People of color and their infants also experience a greater burden of many health conditions that research has shown may be alleviated by breastfeeding.[50] These outcomes are largely driven by the effects of structural racism, poverty, and segregation. Research has also shown that systemic racism contributes to lower uptake and continuation of breastfeeding among Black individuals without HIV.[51] These issues should be considered as part of counseling and support for decisions around infant feeding with HIV in the United States. It is also important to recognize that, even in the United States, some people have limited access to safe water and/or difficulty obtaining formula. It is estimated that 17% of the U.S. population relied on privately owned wells for water in 2010; these are not regulated and are not subject to Environmental Protection Act standards.[52]

Cultural Considerations

Environmental, social, familial, and personal pressures to consider breastfeeding may be faced during pregnancy.[5,12,50,53-58] Many factors affect a woman's decision to breastfeed her infant; these include bonding; maternal and infant health benefits; social, cultural, and religious factors; and concerns about HIV-related stigma and disclosure.[19,23,54]

Some women, especially those from a country or cultural background where breastfeeding is the norm, fear that not breastfeeding will lead to disclosure of their HIV status.[5,57,58] Focus groups held in Canada elucidated the importance of discussing infant feeding options and motivations to breastfeed, especially among women who had immigrated from other countries where they had been encouraged to breastfeed.[13]

Risk of HIV Transmission to Infants Through Breastfeeding

Both the evidence regarding the risk of HIV transmission via breastfeeding and the strategies to reduce this type of transmission come from studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries, where rates of infant mortality are high and many families do not have access to safe water and affordable formula. Without maternal ART or infant ARV prophylaxis, the risk of an infant acquiring HIV through breastfeeding is 15% to 20% over 2 years.[59,60] The mechanisms of HIV transmission by breastfeeding are not fully understood.[61,62] This lack of current knowledge, and the fact that rare HIV

transmissions during breastfeeding have occurred when breast milk and/or plasma HIV viral load was undetectable, complicate decision-making.[63,64].

Studies have shown that maternal ART throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding or infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding can reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of breast milk–associated HIV transmission.[65-69] However, in most of these studies, ART was initiated late in pregnancy, and ARV medications for women or infants were only provided for 6 months after birth, with limited data on maternal plasma HIV viral load during breastfeeding. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in 2017 identified six studies with ART started at some point during pregnancy and continued for at least 6 months postpartum that provided estimates of postnatal transmission rates, excluding peripartum infections diagnosed before 6 weeks of age. The pooled postnatal transmission rate at 6 months was 1.1% (95% confidence interval, 0.32% to 1.85%), with substantial heterogeneity. Transmission rates in the included studies ranged from 0.2% to 3.1%.[70]

As ART has become more widely available for women during pregnancy and the postpartum period, studies have evaluated HIV transmission during breastfeeding among women who continued ART longer than women in previous studies. The PROMISE (Promoting Maternal and Infant Survival Everywhere Study) trial, which included more than 2,400 women with CD4 T lymphocyte cell counts ≥350 cells/mm^3, compared the efficacy of prolonged infant ARV prophylaxis with daily oral NVP to maternal ART in preventing HIV transmission during breastfeeding. Both treatments continued through cessation of breastfeeding or 18 months postpartum, whichever came first. This study reported estimated transmission rates of 0.3% at 6 months and 0.6% at 12 months in both arms.[1] Both maternal HIV RNA load and maternal HIV drug resistance were independently associated with breastfeeding transmission.[71] A secondary analysis of the PROMISE trial demonstrated an association between maternal viral load and HIV transmission among mother–baby pairs in the maternal ART arm but not in the infant ARV prophylaxis arm. Two infants in the maternal ART arm acquired HIV despite maternal viral load measured as not detected or detected but less than 40 copies/mL on the date that the infants' first samples tested positive for HIV RNA.[63]

Smaller studies have also looked at HIV transmission in the context of maternal ART and viral load monitoring. Two cases of HIV transmission during breastfeeding were reported among 186 infants born during a study in Tanzania; the first occurred in the infant of a mother who had a high viral load 1 month after delivery, and the second occurred after a mother discontinued ART. No cases of HIV transmission were reported among infants who were born to virally suppressed mothers who remained in care.[72]

In a prospective follow-up of 475 breastfeeding mother–infant pairs in Zimbabwe, there were two postpartum transmissions, both from women with HIV RNA levels >1,000 copies/mL.[73] In a secondary analysis of the Breastfeeding, Antiretrovirals, and Nutrition (BAN) study, increased maternal ART adherence was associated with lower breast milk and plasma viral loads. Higher breast milk and plasma viral loads were associated with increased breast milk transmission. When maternal plasma viral load remained <100 copies/mL during breastfeeding, there were no occurrences of infant HIV acquisition.[64]

There have been at least five additional published cases of HIV transmission when maternal viral load was <50 copies/mL close to the time of transmission. Two cases are from an observational study in Malawi. In one, ART was started 8 weeks before delivery, and maternal plasma RNA was <37 copies/mL at 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months postpartum. The infant was breastfed until 9 months of age and tested positive for HIV at 12 months of age after testing negative at months

1, 3, and 6. HIV RNA measured in the breast milk was 293 copies/mL at 1 month postpartum and <37 copies/mL at months 3 and 6. In the second case, ART was started 14 weeks before delivery, and maternal plasma RNA was <37 copies/mL at 1 month and 3 months postpartum. The infant tested positive for HIV at 3 months of age, after testing negative at 1 month. HIV RNA measured in the breast milk was <37 copies/mL at 1 month postpartum and 90 copies/mL at 3 months.[74]

The Mma Bana study in Botswana compared triple nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) therapy (abacavir, ZDV, and lamivudine [3TC]) to protease inhibitor (PI)–based therapy (lopinavir/ritonavir plus ZDV and 3TC). There were two lactational transmissions where maternal plasma and breast milk RNA were <50 copies/mL at 1 and 3 months postpartum, both in the NRTI arm. In one case, ART was started 4 weeks before delivery and viral load was elevated at delivery; the infant tested positive for HIV at 94 days of life after testing negative at 28 days. In the other case, ART was started 14 weeks before delivery and HIV RNA was <50 copies/mL at delivery, although issues with adherence were reported; the infant tested positive for HIV at 91 days of life after testing negative at 21 days.[75] In DOLPHIN-2 (Dolutegravir in Pregnant HIV Mothers and Their Neonates), which compared dolutegravir- versus efavirenz (EFV)-based ART started in the third trimester, out of 268 mother–infant pairs, there was one breastfeeding HIV transmission in the EFV group. HIV was diagnosed in the infant at 72 weeks of age (16 months), and maternal viral load was <50 copies/mL at 12 weeks, 24 weeks, 48 weeks, and 72 weeks postpartum.[1,2,63,71]

In all these studies, maternal ART was initiated in the second or third trimester or postpartum. No studies have systematically evaluated the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding when maternal ART is started before pregnancy or in the first trimester and continued throughout breastfeeding.

In the Tshilo Dikotla Study (Botswana), frequent monitoring of HIV viral load occurred in pregnancy and postpartum while breastfeeding was ongoing, counseling was offered on adherence to ARV medications for both mothers and infants, and infant virologic diagnostic tests were performed routinely. Women were maintained on ART, and infants received 4 weeks of prophylactic ZDV or NVP. If a woman had a detectable viral load, she was encouraged to switch to formula feeding, but shared decision-making was employed. Among 247 participants, 19 had detectable viral loads at some point during breastfeeding. Twelve chose to stop breastfeeding, and seven continued to breastfeed with ongoing counseling and frequent viral load checks. There were no cases of HIV transmission via breastfeeding.[76]

Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs During Breastfeeding

Parents are often concerned about infant exposure to ARV medications through breast milk. The non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) NVP, EFV, and etravirine have been detected in breast milk; however, the levels of these ARV medications that have been detected in breast milk are lower than those seen in maternal plasma. Among PIs, lopinavir, ritonavir, and atazanavir have been found in very low concentrations in breast milk, with little to no drug detectable in the blood of the breastfed infant.[77] NRTIs show more variability than PIs and NNRTIs. Tenofovir concentrations from tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) are very low in breast milk, and the drug is undetectable in the blood of the breastfed infant.[77-79] Emtricitabine and 3TC have more accumulation in breast milk and can sometimes be detected in the blood of the breastfed infant (in 19% and 36% of infants, respectively).[77] A subanalysis of the BAN study confirmed higher levels of the NRTIs ZDV and 3TC in breast milk than in maternal plasma, in contrast to NNRTIs and PIs. The study demonstrated that higher drug concentrations in the maternal plasma and breast milk compartments were associated

with lower levels of the virus in both compartments and a lower incidence of viral transmission during breastfeeding.[80] Data on the transfer of integrase strand transfer inhibitors to breast milk in humans are limited; data do show that dolutegravir is found in breast milk at levels that are about 3% of those seen in maternal plasma.[81] For more details on the passage of ARV medications into breast milk, see the individual drug sections in Appendix B: Supplement: Safety and Toxicity of Individual Antiretroviral Agents in Pregnancy.

A systematic data review showed a decrease in maternal bone mineral content among breastfeeding mothers who were receiving TDF-based ART compared to mothers who received no ART, but whether this persisted after discontinuation of breastfeeding was not known.[82] The clinical significance of the reduced bone mineral density is uncertain. Subsequent studies in Africa have shown TDF-based ART to be associated with a decrease in bone mineral density during lactation. In one study, bone mineral density decline through 74 weeks postpartum was greater in breastfeeding women with HIV receiving TDF than in those receiving ZDV-based ART.[83] A second study comparing bone mineral density in women with HIV receiving TDF-based ART to women without HIV showed accelerated loss during lactation, with only partial recovery by 3 months after cessation of lactation.[84]

The rates of serious adverse events among infants who receive ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding are low (see Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs for Infant Prophylaxis in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). In infants, serious adverse events that are associated with the use of ART by breastfeeding mothers appear to be relatively uncommon. In two studies that compared the efficacy of maternal ART (ZDV-based ART in one study and TDF-based ART in the other) to infant NVP prophylaxis with no maternal ART during breastfeeding for prevention of postnatal HIV transmission, no significant differences in infant adverse events were observed between study arms.[1,66] In breastfed infants in the PROMISE study, week 26 mean lumbar spine bone mineral content was lower in infants in the maternal ART group than in the infant NVP group. This difference (about 0.23 g) was less than one-half standard deviation, considered unlikely to be clinically relevant. No infant renal safety concerns were observed.[85] An infant who acquires HIV while breastfeeding is at risk for developing ARV medication resistance due to subtherapeutic drug levels in breast milk.[71,86-88] A longitudinal retrospective study of Kenyan women with HIV from the pre-ART era showed no statistically significant difference in the composition of the bacterial microbiome of breast milk from women receiving combination antiretroviral (cART) and those receiving no ARV medications during breastfeeding.[89]

Likewise, the rates of serious adverse events among infants who receive extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding are low. In one study, the rate of adverse events in infants receiving 6 months of NVP was not significantly different from the rate in infants receiving placebo.[66] For additional information, see Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs for Infant Prophylaxis in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV. Studies to date have examined only short-term adverse events, and few data are available on whether there might be long-term consequences of these drug exposures.

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Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children

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Panel's Recommendations

- Virologic assays (HIV RNA or HIV DNA nucleic acid tests [NATs]) that directly detect HIV must be used to diagnose HIV in infants and children aged <18 months with perinatal HIV exposure; HIV antibody and HIV antigen/antibody tests should not be used (AII).
- Plasma HIV RNA or cell-associated HIV DNA NATs are generally equally recommended (AII).
- An assay that detects HIV non–B subtype viruses or Group O infections (e.g., an HIV RNA NAT or a total DNA/RNA test) is recommended for use in infants and children perinatally exposed to known or suspected non–B subtype virus or Group O infections (AII).
- Virologic diagnostic testing using an HIV NAT (see Table 3 below) is recommended for all infants with perinatal HIV exposure at the following ages:
  - Birth (AII)
    - The test at birth generally should be performed in all infants with perinatal HIV exposure but is not necessary for infants at low risk of HIV acquisition (HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL from 20 weeks of gestation through delivery put infants at low risk of HIV acquisition). Birth testing should be performed in infants at low risk of HIV acquisition if there are plans to breastfeed or there are concerns about loss to follow-up (BIII).
  - 14 to 21 days (AII)
  - 1 to 2 months (AII)
  - 4 to 6 months (AII)
- For infants who receive presumptive HIV therapy, additional virologic diagnostic testing is recommended 2 to 6 weeks after antiretroviral (ARV) drugs are discontinued (BII).
- A positive virologic test should be confirmed as soon as possible by a repeat virologic test (AII).
- Definitive exclusion of HIV infection in non-breastfed infants is based on two or more negative virologic tests (and no positive virologic tests), with one negative test obtained at age ≥1 month (and at least 2–6 weeks after discontinuation of infant ARVs) and one at age ≥4 months, or two negative HIV antibody tests from separate specimens that were obtained at age ≥6 months (AII).
- Additional HIV testing (e.g., HIV NAT, HIV antibody, HIV antigen/antibody) is not needed routinely for non-breastfed infants who meet the criteria for definitive exclusion of HIV and who have had no known or suspected HIV exposure after birth (AII).
- For infants with perinatal HIV exposure who are being breastfed, virologic diagnostic testing is recommended at birth, 14 to 21 days, 1 to 2 months, and 4 to 6 months of age (AII). An additional virologic test should be performed if the gap between the tests at ages 1 to 2 months and 4 to 6 months is greater than 3 months. See Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding.
  - Virologic diagnostic testing should be performed at least every 3 months during breastfeeding (BII);
  - After cessation of breastfeeding, irrespective of when breastfeeding ends, virologic diagnostic testing should be performed at 4 to 6 weeks and 4 to 6 months after cessation (BII).

Infants with potential HIV exposure after birth (e.g., diagnosis of HIV during breastfeeding, premasticated feeding, sexual abuse, contaminated blood products, percutaneous exposure) require additional testing using HIV antigen/antibody and/or HIV NAT assays, based on age at time of exposure and the maternal HIV status at delivery (AII).

- Age-appropriate HIV testing is also recommended for infants and children with signs and/or symptoms of HIV, even in the absence of documented or suspected HIV exposure (AII).
- For children aged ≥18 months, HIV antibody (or HIV antigen/antibody) tests are recommended for diagnostic testing (AII).
  - When early (acute or recent) HIV infection is suspected, additional testing with an HIV NAT may be necessary to diagnose HIV infection (AII).

Note: The National Perinatal HIV Hotline provides consultations on issues related to the management of perinatal HIV infection, including diagnostic testing (1-888-448-8765; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional

Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion*

† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to post-pubertal adolescents

Diagnosis of HIV in Infants and Children

HIV can be diagnosed definitively by virologic testing in most non-breastfed infants with perinatal HIV exposure by age 1 to 2 months and in all by age 4 to 6 months. Antibody tests, including antigen/antibody combination immunoassays, do not establish the presence of HIV in infants because HIV antibodies that have been transferred transplacentally may be detected (i.e., false positive); therefore, a virologic test must be used.[1, 2] Positive virologic tests (i.e., nucleic acid tests [NATs]—a class of tests that includes HIV RNA and HIV DNA polymerase chain reaction [PCR] assays and related RNA qualitative or quantitative assays) indicate likely HIV infection. Plasma HIV RNA and HIV DNA NATs are generally equally recommended. However, both tests can be affected by antiretroviral therapy (ART) through transplacental transfer of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to the fetus during pregnancy or by ARV drugs administered to the infant as prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy. In general, qualitative HIV proviral DNA PCR assays from whole blood detecting cell-associated virus are less affected by ARVs.

A positive HIV test result should be confirmed as soon as possible by repeat virologic testing, because false-positive results can occur with both RNA and DNA assays.[3] A 2019 systematic review provides additional information on the global and regional molecular epidemiology of Group M subtype infections and recombinants among subtypes.[4] Newer HIV RNA PCR assays are usually "dual-target" assays, which target two separate highly conserved regions on the HIV genome. Dual-target HIV assays are better than older RNA assays at detecting non–subtype B HIV infection and Group O strains[5-10] (See Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).

Antigen/antibody combination immunoassays that detect HIV-1/2 antibodies and HIV-1 p24 antigen **are not recommended** for diagnosis of HIV infection in infants with known perinatal HIV exposure. In the first months of life, the antigen component of antigen/antibody tests is less sensitive than an HIV NAT, and antibody tests should not be used for HIV diagnosis in infants and children aged <18 months.[11-13] Children with perinatal HIV exposure who are aged ≥18 months occasionally have residual HIV antibodies from the antepartum period; definitive confirmation of HIV infection in children in this age group who remain HIV antibody–positive should be based on a NAT (see Special

Situations below). Diagnosis in children aged ≥18 months relies primarily on HIV antibody and antigen/antibody tests (see Diagnostic Testing in Children with Postnatal HIV Exposure below).[1]

An infant who has a positive HIV antibody test but the maternal HIV status is unknown (see Pregnancy and Postpartum HIV Testing and Identification of Perinatal and Postnatal HIV Exposure) should be assumed to have been exposed to HIV. The infant should undergo HIV diagnostic testing, as described in Timing of Diagnostic Testing in Infants with Perinatal HIV Exposure below,[3] and receive presumptive HIV therapy as soon as possible (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants with *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV).

Timing of Diagnostic Testing in Infants With Perinatal HIV Exposure

Confirmation of HIV infection is based on the results of positive virologic tests from two separate blood samples in infants and children <18 months. Table 3 below summarizes the timing of recommended virologic diagnostic testing for infants based on HIV transmission risk. Infants at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission may require additional virologic testing, given the increased risk of infection and concern that ARV prophylaxis, particularly combination ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy, may reduce the sensitivity of diagnostic testing. The risk of transmission is determined based on whether ART is being taken and viral suppression is achieved and sustained during pregnancy and postpartum.

HIV infection can be **presumptively excluded** in non-breastfed infants with two or more negative virologic tests (one at age ≥2 weeks and one at age ≥4 weeks), one negative virologic test at age ≥8 weeks at least 2 weeks after discontinuing multidrug ARV prophylaxis/presumptive therapy, or one negative HIV antibody test at age ≥6 months.[1, 3]

Definitive exclusion of HIV infection in non-breastfed infants is based on two or more negative virologic tests, with one negative test obtained at age ≥1 month (and at least 2–6 weeks after discontinuation of infant ARVs) and one at age ≥4 months, or two negative HIV antibody tests from separate specimens that were obtained at age ≥6 months. For both presumptive and definitive exclusion of HIV infection, a child must have no other laboratory evidence (i.e., no positive virologic test results or low CD4 T lymphocyte cell count/percentage) or clinical evidence of HIV infection and must not be breastfeeding. No additional HIV testing of any kind (e.g., NAT, antibody, antigen/antibody) is needed routinely for non-breastfed infants who meet the criteria for definitive exclusion of HIV and who have had no known or suspected HIV exposure after birth.

Pneumocystis jirovecii pneumonia (PCP) prophylaxis is recommended for infants with **indeterminate** HIV infection status starting at age 4 to 6 weeks until they are determined to be definitively or presumptively without HIV infection.[14] Thus, PCP prophylaxis can be avoided or discontinued if HIV infection is presumptively excluded (see Initial Postnatal Management of the Neonate Exposed to HIV and *Pneumocystis jirovecii* Pneumonia in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines).

Virologic Testing at Birth

Virologic testing at birth provides insights about the timing of HIV transmission and supports early HIV diagnosis for rapid initiation of ART when indicated (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines). Infants who have a positive virologic test result at or before age 48 hours are considered to have early (*in utero*)

infection, whereas non-breastfed infants who have a negative virologic test result during the first week of life and subsequently have positive test results are considered to have late (intrapartum) infection.[15-17]

In addition to early HIV diagnosis, results of birth testing are used in clinical decisions about infant ARV management. Negative HIV virologic testing at birth would rule out *in utero* infection and allow de-escalation of a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen for some infants. See Table 13 and associated content in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.

Virologic testing at birth should generally be performed for all infants with perinatal HIV exposure but is not necessary for infants who are at low risk of infection (HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL from 20 weeks gestation through delivery put infants at low risk of HIV acquisition) unless there are plans to breastfeed. When breastfeeding is planned for an infant at low risk of HIV acquisition, a birth test provides baseline information, should the infant subsequently have a positive test. Virologic testing at birth should also be considered whenever there are concerns that the newborn may be lost to follow-up without testing.

Specimens for HIV testing at birth should be obtained before or immediately after initiating an ARV drug regimen; however, presumptive HIV therapy or ARV prophylaxis should not be delayed.

Blood samples from the umbilical cord should not be used for diagnostic evaluation because of the potential for contamination with maternal blood.

Virologic Testing at Age 14 to 21 Days

Some children with perinatal HIV exposure can have a positive NAT between 14 and 21 days of age.[3] Early identification of infection permits transition from presumptive HIV therapy to treatment doses of ART (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines).

Virologic Testing at Age 1 to 3 Months

Testing performed at age 1 to 3 months is intended to maximize the likelihood of detecting HIV infection in infants with perinatal HIV exposure. In the HIV Prevention Trials Network 040 study, 93 of 140 infants with HIV (66.4%) were identified at birth. Infants who received negative test results in the first 7 days of life received an HIV diagnosis when the next diagnostic test was performed at 3 months of age.[18] For infants at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV and the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Interventions to Reduce Perinatal Transmission suggest performing an additional virologic test 2 to 6 weeks after ARV drugs are discontinued (i.e., at age 8–12 weeks when the infant receives 6 weeks of prophylaxis), given the increased risk of infection and concern that ARV prophylaxis, particularly combination ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy, may reduce the sensitivity of diagnostic testing.[18, 19] In these situations, many experts recommend one test at age 4 to 6 weeks to allow prompt diagnosis of HIV in infants with an additional test at 8 to 12 weeks of life (i.e., 2–6 weeks after cessation of prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy) to capture additional cases (see Table 3 below). For infants at low risk of HIV transmission, a single test obtained at 1 to 2 months of age may be timed to occur 2 to 4 weeks after cessation of ARV prophylaxis.

Virologic Testing at Age 4 to 6 Months

Infants with HIV exposure who have had negative virologic assays at age 14 to 21 days and at age 1 to 2 months, who have had no positive virologic tests, who have no clinical evidence of HIV infection, and who are not breastfed should be retested at age 4 to 6 months for definitive exclusion of HIV infection.

Antibody Testing at Age 6 Months and Older

Two or more negative results of HIV antibody tests that were performed in non-breastfed infants at age ≥6 months also can be used to exclude HIV infection definitively in children with no clinical or virologic laboratory-documented evidence of HIV infection.[20, 21]

Antibody Testing at Age ≥18 Months to Document Seroreversion

In general, no additional HIV testing of any kind (e.g., NAT, antibody, antigen/antibody) is needed routinely for non-breastfed infants who meet the criteria for definitive exclusion of HIV and who have had no known or suspected HIV exposure after birth.

Virologic Testing for Infants With Perinatal HIV Exposure Who Are Being Breastfed

Some may choose to breastfeed with HIV (see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). A descriptive study of 72 people with HIV who breastfed their infants in North America reported high variability in policies, infant ARV prophylaxis, and infant and parental testing practices among institutions and noted the need to identify best care practices.[22] Table 3 summarizes the recommended diagnostic testing schedule for infants who are being breastfed. Infants with perinatal HIV exposure who are being breastfed should have virologic diagnostic testing at the standard time points: 14 to 21 days, 1 to 2 months, and 4 to 6 months (see Table 3 below). In addition, a virologic test at birth is recommended to provide baseline information should the infant subsequently have a positive test. In some cases, an additional virologic test should be performed between the 1-to-2-month and 4-to-6-month time points if the gap between tests is greater than 3 months. Infants continuing to be breastfed beyond 6 months of age should have virologic diagnostic testing at least every 3 months during breastfeeding. At cessation of breastfeeding, virologic diagnostic testing should be performed at 4 to 6 weeks and 4 to 6 months after breastfeeding has ended, regardless of the age of the child when breastfeeding is discontinued. If the infant is receiving extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding, an additional test should be done at least 2 weeks after cessation of ARV prophylaxis. If an infant's virologic test result is positive, a repeat test should be performed as soon as possible and ART should be initiated.

No data exist to inform the appropriate frequency of maternal viral load testing during breastfeeding. One approach is to monitor plasma viral load every 1 to 2 months during breastfeeding. Additional infant virologic testing using an HIV NAT is indicated if the maternal viral load becomes detectable during breastfeeding (for infant ARV prophylaxis considerations, see Table 14 and Table 14.1 in Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). If maternal viral load is detectable and breastfeeding continues, some Panel members would recommend monthly virologic testing of the infant as an approach to early detection of HIV infection during ongoing exposure. After cessation of breastfeeding, irrespective of when breastfeeding ends,

virologic testing should be performed at 4 to 6 weeks and 4 to 6 months after cessation of breastfeeding. If the breastfed infant is receiving presumptive HIV therapy or ARV prophylaxis, this virologic testing should be performed at least 2 weeks after discontinuation of infant ARV administration. Consultation with an expert and/or the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (8884488765) is recommended in these situations and for questions about HIV diagnostic testing for infants with perinatal HIV exposure who are being breastfed. For additional information, see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding.

Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV

Infants With Perinatal HIV Exposure[a]	
Risk Category	**Age at HIV NAT[b,c] Testing**
Infants at *High* Risk of HIV Acquisition Infants with perinatal HIV exposure to— • Viremia (HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL) in the 4 weeks prior to delivery • Early (acute or recent) HIV during pregnancy or HIV diagnosed in labor or postpartum Note: Viremia can be documented by a laboratory or presumed by other clinical factors (e.g., new diagnosis, ART adherence challenges, stopping ART prior to delivery).	Birth 14–21 days 1–2 months 2–3 months (see note below) 4–6 months All infants at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission should have specimens obtained for HIV testing at birth before or immediately after initiating an ARV drug regimen; however, presumptive HIV therapy should not be delayed. Note: Additional virologic testing is recommended 2 to 6 weeks after infant ARV drugs are discontinued (i.e., at age 2 to 3 months if the infant receives 6 weeks of ARV drugs). If an infant's NAT test result is positive, a repeat test should be performed as soon as possible and ART should be initiated.
Infants at *Low* Risk of HIV Acquisition Who Are Not Being Breastfed Infants with perinatal HIV exposure to— • Sustained viral suppression (<50 copies/mL) from 20 weeks of gestation through delivery Note: Ideally, sustained viral suppression is documented by HIV RNA testing, including at least two consecutive tests obtained at least 4 weeks apart with HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, but can be based on the clinical judgment of providers.	Birth (see note below) 14–21 days 1–2 months (see note below) 4–6 months Note: A birth test generally should be performed but is not necessary for infants at low risk of HIV acquisition unless there are concerns that the newborn could be lost to follow-up without further testing. Note: For infants at low risk of HIV acquisition, testing may be timed to occur at least 2 weeks after cessation of ZDV prophylaxis.
Infants Not Meeting Criteria for High or Low Risk of HIV Acquisition • In these clinical scenarios, some infants may receive presumptive HIV therapy and others may receive only ZDV prophylaxis.	For all infants in this group, a NAT should be obtained at birth and the NAT testing schedule for infants at high risk of HIV acquisition (shown above) should be followed.

	The timing of virologic testing 2 to 6 weeks after ARV drugs are discontinued will vary based on the duration of infant ARV drugs.
See Table 13 and Table 13.1 in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for information about presumptive HIV therapy and ZDV prophylaxis, including duration of ARV drugs.	
Infants With Perinatal HIV Exposure at Low Risk of HIV Acquisition Who Are Being Breastfed	
Guidance for Virologic Testing During Breastfeeding	**Age at HIV NAT[b,c] Testing**
From Birth to Age 6 Months A NAT test at birth is recommended for infants with perinatal HIV exposure who are at low risk of HIV acquisition and are being breastfed.	Birth 14–21 days 1–2 months (see note below) 4–6 months Note: NAT testing of the infant should be performed at least every 3 months during breastfeeding. An additional virologic test should be performed if the gap between the tests at ages 1 to 2 months and 4 to 6 months is greater than 3 months. In addition to the standard time points after birth, NAT testing also should be performed at 4 to 6 weeks and 4 to 6 months after cessation of breastfeeding, regardless of the age when breastfeeding ends.
If Breastfeeding Continues Beyond 6 Months of Age	NAT testing of the infant should be performed at least every 3 months during breastfeeding and at 4 to 6 weeks and 4 to 6 months after cessation of breastfeeding, regardless of the age when breastfeeding ends.
If Viremia Develops While Breastfeeding (a detectable viral load)	Prompt NAT testing of the infant Additional testing time points are based on the clinical scenario and use of infant ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy; see Table 14 in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV. If there is a detectable maternal viral load and breastfeeding continues, some Panel members would recommend monthly virologic testing of the infant as an approach to early detection of HIV infection during ongoing exposure. Consultation with an expert is recommended to determine the need for infant ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy and additional testing time points.
Consultation with an expert and/or the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (888-448-8765) is recommended for questions about HIV diagnostic testing for infants with perinatal HIV exposure who are being breastfed. See Table 14 in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for information about extended ARV prophylaxis and presumptive HIV therapy during breastfeeding. See Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding for additional guidance about breastfeeding.	

[a] This table summarizes standard time points for HIV virologic diagnostic testing of infants according to risk of perinatal acquisition.

[b] HIV RNA or HIV DNA NATs that directly detect HIV.

[c] If maternal HIV-2 infection is suspected or confirmed, infant testing for HIV-2 can follow the same schedule (see Virologic Assays to Diagnose HIV-2 Infections below).

Key: ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; NAT = nucleic acid test; ZDV = zidovudine

Diagnostic Testing in Children With Postnatal HIV Exposure

Infants and children with potential HIV exposure after birth (e.g., HIV diagnosed during breastfeeding, premasticated feeding, sexual abuse, contaminated blood products, percutaneous exposure) require age-appropriate testing. Infants with perinatal HIV exposure who have these additional exposures after birth require HIV NAT testing for diagnosis. Infants aged <18 months who were not exposed to HIV at delivery and infants aged ≥18 months who have these potential exposures require HIV antigen/antibody testing, unless the time between potential exposure and testing indicates that the patient is in the window for seroconversion, when an HIV NAT is more sensitive. Repeat testing may still be required (see Pregnancy and Postpartum HIV Testing and Identification of Perinatal and Postnatal HIV Exposure for additional information).

New HIV Diagnosis While Breastfeeding

Infants may be exposed to HIV through breastfeeding if acute or primary maternal HIV infection occurs or when pre-existing HIV infection was not diagnosed during pregnancy or postpartum.[23] Diagnosis of HIV during breastfeeding should prompt health care professionals to counsel to discontinue breastfeeding immediately to reduce the risk of postnatal transmission to the infant. In these situations, infant virologic diagnostic testing using an HIV NAT is recommended immediately and 14 to 21 days, 4 to 6 weeks, and 4 to 6 months after the infant's last exposure to breast milk (i.e., cessation of breastfeeding). A virologic test also should be performed at least 2 weeks after cessation of presumptive HIV therapy if provided (see ARV Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Duplicate tests are not needed if some of these time points overlap with standard post-natal testing. For additional information, consult the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

Premastication

Receipt of solid food that has been premasticated or prewarmed in the mouth by a caregiver with HIV is associated with risk of HIV transmission.[24-30] If this occurs in children with perinatal HIV exposure aged <18 months with prior negative virologic tests, it will be necessary for such children to undergo virologic diagnostic testing because they may have residual HIV antibodies from the antepartum period (see Special Situations below).

Additional Routes of HIV Transmission

Additional routes of HIV transmission in children include sexual abuse, receipt of contaminated blood products, and needlestick with contaminated needles. It may be difficult to obtain a history of HIV exposure. Therefore, age-appropriate HIV testing is recommended for infants and children with signs and/or symptoms of HIV infection, even in the absence of documented or suspected perinatal or non-perinatal HIV exposure. Acquisition of HIV in older children is possible through accidental needlestick injuries, sexual transmission, or injection drug use. Medical procedures performed in settings with inadequate infection control practices may pose a potential risk; although tattooing or

body piercing present a potential risk of HIV transmission, no reported cases of HIV transmission from these activities have been documented.[31]

Diagnostic Testing

Diagnosis of HIV-1 infection in infants and children with non-perinatal HIV exposure only or in children with perinatal HIV exposure who are aged ≥18 months relies primarily on HIV antibody and antigen/antibody tests.[1, 32] U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved diagnostic tests include the following:

- Antigen/antibody combination immunoassays, which detect HIV-1/2 antibodies and HIV-1 p24 antigen. These tests are recommended for initial testing to screen for established infection with HIV-1 or HIV-2 and for acute HIV-1 infection. However, p24 antigen from HIV-1 non-B strains, HIV-1 non-M strains, and HIV-2 strains may not be detected.[33] Recent data suggest that the use of immunoassays and rapid diagnostic test combination algorithms that have limited HIV antigen breadth may not be adequate for diagnosis of HIV infection in children following early treatment with ART.[34]
- HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation immunoassay, which differentiates HIV-1 antibodies from HIV-2 antibodies. This immunoassay is recommended for supplemental testing.
- HIV-1 NAT. A NAT always is indicated as an additional test to diagnose acute HIV infection.

For information on diagnosis of HIV-2 infection, see Virologic Assays to Diagnose HIV-2 Infections below.

Special Situations

Late Seroreversion (Aged ≥18 Months)

Non-breastfed children with perinatal HIV exposure, no other HIV transmission risk factor, and no clinical or virologic laboratory evidence of HIV infection may have residual HIV antibodies from the antepartum period up to age 24 months. These children are called late seroreverters.[35-38] In one study, 14% of children with HIV exposure who did not have HIV infection seroreverted after age 18 months.[38] More recent data from Thailand associated late seroreversion with the antenatal use of protease inhibitors in pregnant women with HIV. In this study, late seroreversion also was associated with the use of fourth-generation combination antigen/antibody immunoassays.[39] These children may have had positive immunoassay results, but supplemental antibody test results indicated indeterminate HIV status. In such cases, repeat antibody testing at a later date confirmed seroreversion. Due to the possibility of residual maternal HIV antibodies, virologic testing is necessary to definitively exclude or confirm HIV infection in children with perinatal HIV exposure who have a positive HIV antibody (or antigen/antibody) test at age ≥18 months. Virologic testing will distinguish late-seroreverting children who do not have HIV but have residual antibodies from children who have antibodies due to underlying HIV infection. Age-appropriate HIV testing also is recommended for infants and children with signs and/or symptoms of HIV, even in the absence of documented or suspected HIV exposure.

Postnatal HIV Infection in Children With Perinatal HIV Exposure and Prior Negative Virologic Test Results for Whom There Are Additional HIV Transmission Risks

In contrast to late seroreverters, in rare situations, postnatal HIV infections have been reported in children with HIV exposure who had prior negative HIV virologic test results. This occurs in children who acquire HIV through an additional risk factor after completion of testing.

Suspicion of HIV-2 or Non–Subtype B HIV-1 Infections With False-Negative Virologic Test Results

Children with non–subtype B HIV-1 and children with HIV-2 may have false-negative virologic tests but persistent positive immunoassay results.[40-42] The diagnostic approach in these situations is discussed below in Virologic Assays to Diagnose Group M Non–Subtype B and Group O HIV-1 Infections and in Virologic Assays to Diagnose HIV-2 Infections.

Virologic Assays to Diagnose HIV in Infants Younger Than 18 Months With Perinatal HIV-1 Exposure

HIV RNA Assays

HIV quantitative RNA assays detect extracellular viral RNA in plasma. Their specificity has been shown to be 100% at birth and age 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months and is comparable to the specificity of HIV DNA PCR.[19] Testing at birth will detect HIV RNA in infants who acquire HIV *in utero* and not in those who acquire HIV from exposure during delivery or immediately before delivery (i.e., during the intrapartum period). Studies have shown that HIV RNA assays identify 25% to 58% of infants with HIV infection from birth through the first week of life, 89% at age 1 month, and 90% to 100% by age 2 months to 3 months. These results are similar to the results of HIV DNA PCR for early diagnosis of HIV.[3]

The sensitivity of HIV RNA assays is affected by maternal antenatal ART or ARV drugs administered to the infant as prophylaxis or presumptive therapy.[43] In one study, the sensitivity of HIV RNA assays was not associated with the type of maternal ART or infant ARV prophylaxis, but HIV RNA levels at 1 month were significantly lower in infants with HIV who were receiving multidrug prophylaxis. In contrast, the median HIV RNA levels were high by age 3 months in both groups after stopping prophylaxis.[19] Between 2010 and 2016, a significant decline in baseline viremia was noted in South Africa's Early Infant Diagnosis program, with loss of detectability documented among some infants with HIV. This decline may have reflected the administration of various prophylactic ARV regimens during those years.[44] Further studies are necessary to evaluate the sensitivity of HIV RNA assays during receipt of multidrug ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy in infants when maternal antenatal ART was received.

An HIV quantitative RNA assay can be used as a confirmatory test for infants who have an initial positive HIV DNA PCR test result. In addition to providing virologic confirmation of infection status, an HIV RNA measurement assesses baseline viral load. An HIV genotype can be performed on the same sample to guide initial ARV treatment in an infant with HIV.

An HIV qualitative RNA assay is an alternative diagnostic test that can be used for infant testing.[16, 45-49]

HIV DNA PCR and Related Assays

HIV DNA PCR is a sensitive technique that is used to detect intracellular HIV viral DNA in peripheral blood mononuclear cells. The specificity of the HIV DNA PCR is 99.8% at birth and 100% at age 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months. Studies have shown that HIV DNA PCR assays identify 20% to 55% of infants with HIV infection from birth through the first week of life, with the same caveat as for RNA testing—testing at birth detects only *in utero* HIV infection and not infection in those infants who acquire HIV during the intrapartum period. This percentage increases to >90% by age 2 weeks to 4 weeks and to 100% at age 3 months and 6 months.[3, 16]

Two studies provided data on diagnostic testing at different time points in infants with confirmed HIV infection, including those who had negative test results at birth. One study noted that among 47 infants with HIV infection who had negative DNA PCR test results at birth, 68% were identified during the period of neonatal ARV prophylaxis at 4 to 6 weeks; by 3 months, all 47 infants were identified.[18] Another study from Cape Town evaluated the sensitivity of HIV DNA assays within 8 days of life during and after initiating ART in infants with HIV. The infants had been exposed to ART *in utero* and ARV drugs for prophylaxis and treatment. In seven infants who achieved virologic suppression (defined as a continuous downward trend in plasma HIV RNA, with <100 copies/mL after 6 months), total HIV DNA continued to decay over 12 months. The authors noted that one infant had undetectable HIV DNA after 6 days on treatment, another had undetectable HIV DNA after 3 months, and a third had undetectable HIV DNA after 4 months, suggesting that rapid decline of HIV-1 RNA and DNA may complicate definitive diagnosis.[50] A data set of 38,043 infants from the Western Cape province of South Africa who were tested at a median age of 45 days showed that infants who received the World Health Organization Option B+ ARV regimen had fewer indeterminate DNA PCR results than infants who were receiving older ARV regimens.[51] Another group of South African investigators reported similar findings in a study of a cohort of 5,743 neonates from Johannesburg who were exposed to HIV.[52]

The AMPLICOR® HIV-1 DNA test has been used widely for diagnosis of HIV in infants perinatally exposed to HIV-1 infection since it was introduced in 1992. However, it is no longer commercially available in the United States. The sensitivity and specificity of noncommercial HIV-1 DNA tests that use individual laboratory reagents may differ from the sensitivity and specificity of an FDA-approved commercial test. These considerations underscore the importance of testing with HIV NATs at 4 months—well after neonatal ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy has stopped.

Other Issues

Virologic Assays to Diagnose Group M Non–Subtype B and Group O HIV-1 Infections

Although HIV-1 Group M subtype B is the predominant viral subtype found in the United States, multiple subtypes and recombinant forms also are found in the United States.[53] Data from the CDC National HIV Surveillance System (NHSS) showed that the number of non–U.S. born children with HIV living in the United States has exceeded the number of U.S.-born children with HIV since 2011, with 65.5% of non–U.S. born children with HIV born in sub-Saharan Africa and 14.3% in Eastern Europe.[54] In an evaluation of infants who received a perinatal HIV infection diagnosis in New York

State in 2001 and 2002, 16.7% of infants had acquired a non–subtype B strain of HIV compared with 4.4% of infants born in 1998 and 1999.[55] Among a group of 40 children who visited a pediatric HIV clinic in Rhode Island between 1991 and 2012, 14 (35%) acquired HIV with non-B HIV-1 subtypes. All 14 children were either born outside the United States or their parents were of foreign origin.[56] In an analysis of 1,277 unique sequences collected in Rhode Island from 2004 to 2011, 8.3% were non-B subtypes (including recombinant forms). Twenty-two percent of participants with non-B subtypes formed transmission clusters, including individuals with perinatally acquired infection.[57] In an analysis of 3,895 HIV-1 sequences that were collected between July 2011 and June 2012 in the United States, 5.3% were determined to be non-B subtypes (including recombinant forms).

Evolving immigration patterns may be contributing to local and regional increases in HIV-1 subtype diversity. Non–subtype B viruses predominate in other parts of the world, such as subtype C in regions of Africa and India and subtype CRF01 in much of Southeast Asia. Group O HIV strains are seen in West-Central Africa.[58] Non–subtype B and Group O strains may be seen in countries with links to these geographical regions.[59-63] The geographical distribution of HIV groups is available at the HIV Sequence Database.

Current HIV RNA PCR assays and the qualitative diagnostic RNA assays are better at detecting non–subtype B HIV infection and the less-common Group O strains than older RNA assays[5-10, 49] (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection). The increased sensitivity is due to amplification of more than one highly conserved region of the HIV genome. HIV DNA assays, though generally less sensitive, may be more sensitive in detecting HIV infection when the infant is receiving ART because identification is based on detection of cell-associated DNA in whole blood or dried blood spots and does not rely on active viral replication.[16, 64]

A qualitative RNA assay, a quantitative RNA assay, or a total DNA/RNA (total nucleic acid) test should be used for infant testing in addition to a DNA PCR assay when evaluating an infant exposed to HIV infection linked to an area that is endemic for non–subtype B HIV or Group O strains, such as Africa or Southeast Asia. These additional tests are also indicated when initial testing is negative using an HIV DNA PCR test and non–subtype B or Group O perinatal exposure is suspected. Two negative HIV antibody test results obtained at age ≥6 months provide further evidence to rule out HIV infection definitively. Clinicians should consult with an expert in pediatric HIV infection; state or local public health departments or CDC may be able to assist in obtaining referrals for diagnostic HIV testing.

Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-Cell and Lentiviral-Based Gene Therapy May Give Rise to False-Positive HIV NAT Results

Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell immunotherapy is a major advancement in cancer therapeutics, including for pediatric B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Reprogramming of T cells is achieved by using gammaretroviral or lentiviral vectors. Recent reports indicate that these vectors may interfere with long terminal repeat genomes in HIV NAT results and, thus, produce false-positive results. As CAR T-cell therapy becomes more widely available for multiple indications, it will be important for clinicians to recognize that routine HIV-1 NAT results may give rise to false results. In addition, lentiviral vector–based gene therapy as treatment for severe combined immunodeficiency can give rise to false-positive HIV NAT results. Laboratories should, therefore, have appropriate alternate HIV-1 NAT resulting platforms made available for this emerging patient population.[65-69]

Virologic Assays to Diagnose HIV-2 Infections

HIV-2 infection is endemic in Angola; Mozambique; West African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo; and parts of India.[70-72] HIV-2 infection also is well documented in France and Portugal, which have large numbers of immigrants from these regions.[73, 74] HIV-1 and HIV-2 coinfection may occur, but this rarely is described outside areas where HIV-2 is endemic. HIV-2 is rare in the United States. Although accurately diagnosing HIV-2 can be difficult, it is clinically important because HIV-2 strains are resistant to several ARV drugs that were developed to suppress HIV-1.[75-77] (See HIV-2 Infection and Pregnancy.)

HIV-2 should be suspected if HIV infection is linked to an area that is endemic for HIV-2 infection or if HIV test results are suggestive of HIV-2 infection (i.e., positive initial HIV 1/2 immunoassay test result and HIV-1 RNA viral loads that are at or below the limit of detection in the absence of treatment). The current recommendation is to use an HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation immunoassay for supplemental testing.[1]

Between 2010 and 2017, an increase in the number of HIV-1/HIV-2 differentiation test results was reported to the CDC's NHSS. More than 99.9% of all HIV infections identified in the United States were categorized as HIV-1, and the number of HIV-2 diagnoses (mono-infection or dual-infection) remained extremely low (<0.03% of all HIV infections).[78]

Infant testing with HIV-2–specific DNA PCR tests should be performed at time points similar to those used for HIV-1 testing when evaluating an infant exposed to known or suspected HIV-2 infection. HIV-2 DNA PCR testing can be arranged by the HIV surveillance program of the state or local health department through their public health laboratory, or the CDC, because this assay is not commercially available.[79, 80] Clinicians should consult with an expert in pediatric HIV infection when caring for infants with suspected or known exposure to HIV-2.[70, 81]

The diagnosis of HIV-2 in children with only non-perinatal exposure or in children with perinatal exposure aged ≥18 months should also follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Association of Public Health Laboratories 2014 laboratory testing guidelines, which recommend using an HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation immunoassay that distinguishes between HIV-1 and HIV-2 antibodies for supplemental testing. All HIV-2 cases should be reported to the HIV surveillance program of the state or local health department; additional HIV-2 DNA PCR testing can be arranged by a local public health laboratory or by CDC if an HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody differentiation immunoassay is inconclusive. HIV-2 DNA PCR testing may be necessary for definitive diagnosis, although this assay is not commercially available.[79, 80]

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Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection

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Panel's Recommendations
• Plasma HIV RNA (viral load) and absolute CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count should be measured at the time of HIV diagnosis, and, if a child is not started on antiretroviral therapy (ART) after diagnosis, this monitoring should be repeated at least every 3 to 4 months thereafter (AIII). • Absolute CD4 count is recommended for monitoring immune status in children of all ages with HIV, with CD4 percentage as an alternative for children aged <5 years (AII). • After initiation of ART or after a change in antiretroviral (ARV) regimen, children should be evaluated for treatment adherence and clinical adverse effects within 1 to 2 weeks; laboratory testing for viral load response and toxicity is recommended at 2 to 4 weeks after treatment initiation or change in ARV regimen and every 3 to 4 months thereafter (see Table 6 below) (AIII). • Children on ART should be monitored for therapy adherence, effectiveness, and toxicities routinely (every 3–4 months) (see Table 6 below) (AII*), see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV and Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance. o Viral load measurement every 3 to 4 months is generally recommended to monitor ART adherence (AIII). o CD4 count can be monitored less frequently (every 6–12 months) in children and adolescents who are adherent to therapy, have sustained virologic suppression and CD4 count values that are well above the threshold for opportunistic infection risk, and have stable clinical status (AII). • To evaluate children with suspected clinical, immunologic, or virologic deterioration or to confirm an abnormal value, additional plasma viral load and CD4 count monitoring should be performed (AIII). • ARV drug resistance testing is recommended at the time of HIV diagnosis, before initiation of therapy in all people who are ART-naive, and before switching regimens in patients with treatment failure (AII). Genotypic resistance testing is preferred for this purpose (AIII). See Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines. Review the history of all previously used ARVs and available resistance test results when making decisions about the choice of new ARVs because mutations may not be detected once the prior drugs have been discontinued (AII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *†Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

This section will address virologic, immunologic, general laboratory, and clinical monitoring of children with HIV, with information that is relevant to both those who have recently received an HIV diagnosis and those who are receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART). Laboratory monitoring of children with HIV poses unique and challenging issues. In infancy and early childhood, plasma HIV RNA concentrations are very high and slow to decrease after ART initiation, and normal CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count values vary by age.[1-4] The threshold values for CD4 counts and viral load that predict the risk of disease progression also change as a child ages.

Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Children With HIV

Initial Evaluation of Children Who Recently Received an HIV Diagnosis, or Are Entering or Transferring to a New Care Setting

Children who have recently received an HIV diagnosis should have their plasma viral loads and CD4 counts measured. Children with HIV should have a complete, age-appropriate medical history and physical examination (see Table 6 below). Their growth and development should be evaluated. Baseline neurodevelopmental screening should be considered for potential early interventions and individualized learning plans. Some medical centers routinely perform neurodevelopmental screening as a baseline to guide future assessments and interventions. Testing also should be performed to assess for HIV-associated conditions, including the following:

- Anemia, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia
- Hypoalbuminemia
- Nephropathy (urinalysis)
- Renal insufficiency (creatinine)
- Hyperglycemia
- Hepatic transaminitis

Baseline screening tests for coinfections and opportunistic infections (OIs), including tests for the following, should be performed:

- Tuberculosis, with an interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) at any age. IGRA is preferred over the tuberculin skin test as it does not cross-react with the Bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine and eliminates the need for a return visit, as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Red Book and in the next anticipated update to the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines.[5]
- Hepatitis B virus (HBV), with HBV surface antibody, HBV surface antigen, and HBV core antibody tests
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV), with HCV nucleic acid (HCV RNA) testing if aged <18 months or HCV antibody if aged ≥18 months
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV), with CMV antibody tests if aged > 12months. Severely immunosuppressed children with HIV who are CMV seropositive should have ophthalmologic screening for CMV retinitis. Some experts consider routine ophthalmologic screening in CMV seropositive children with HIV until they are old enough to report visual symptoms.

Monitoring for OIs should follow the guidelines that are appropriate for the child's exposure history and clinical setting (see the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines). Children with HIV who are relocating from outside the United States may benefit from additional evaluations—such as gastrointestinal parasites, lead level, and thyroid function. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention International Adoption.[6]

Laboratory confirmation of HIV infection should be obtained when available documentation is incomplete (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children). Genotypic resistance testing should be performed, even if ART is not initiated immediately. In addition, a full antiretroviral (ARV) drug history should be obtained; this history should include any exposure to ARV drugs for the prevention of perinatal HIV transmission (see Drug-Resistance Testing in the

Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). HLA-B*5701 testing should be conducted on initial laboratory screening to allow for possible abacavir (ABC) initiation, and an alternative ARV drug should be used if the HLA-B*5701 test result is positive[7] (see the Abacavir section in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information).

Before initiating therapy or making changes to a patient's ARV regimen, a clinician and multidisciplinary team members (where available) should assess potential barriers to adherence and discuss the importance of adherence with the patient and/or their caregiver (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV).

If a child does not initiate ART after receiving an HIV diagnosis, the child's CD4 count and plasma viral load should be monitored at least every 3 to 4 months.

Evaluation at Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

At the time of ART initiation, a physical examination should be performed, including assessment of weight and height, sexual maturity rating, and baseline labs for plasma viral load and CD4 count, should be obtained to monitor ART response (see Table 6 below). To set the baseline for monitoring ART toxicity (see Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance), a complete blood count, urinalysis, and serum chemistry panel (including levels of electrolytes, creatinine, glucose, and hepatic transaminases) should be performed (see Table 6 below). The levels of serum lipids (cholesterol and triglycerides) also should be measured. For information about the adverse effects (AEs) associated with a specific ARV drug, see Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for complete information on each drug. Tables 17a–17k in Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance provide information about specific toxicities associated with ARV drugs (e.g., osteopenia and osteoporosis, lipodystrophies and weight gain, nephrotoxic effects) and include guidance for prevention, monitoring, and management.

Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring After Initiating or Changing an Antiretroviral Regimen

Children who start ART or who change to a new regimen should be monitored to assess the effectiveness, tolerability, and AEs of the regimen and to evaluate medication adherence. Clinicians and multidisciplinary teams should schedule frequent clinical in-person and/or telemedicine visits to monitor patients closely during the first few months after initiating a new ARV regimen. The first few weeks of ART can be particularly difficult for children and their caregivers; they must adjust their schedules to allow consistent and routine administration of medication doses. Children also may experience the AEs of medications, and both children and their caregivers need assistance to determine whether the effects are temporary and tolerable or more serious or long term, requiring a clinical visit. It is critical that providers communicate with caregivers and children in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner and use plain language. This approach promotes interactive reporting and ensures that providers can have a productive dialogue with both children and their caregivers, particularly in situations where medication adherence is reported to be inconsistent.

Telemedicine visits and telehealth communication platforms are particularly relevant to the care of adolescent patients based on their technology access and habits.[8, 9] Additional check-ins via telephone and/or telehealth (emails, text messaging, app-based communications) may support adherence and early identification of medication side effects. The continuity of patient and caregiver interactions is an opportunity for clinicians and the multidisciplinary team to provide support and discuss adherence with patients and their caregivers.

A systematic review of randomized controlled trials from the last 10 years that used a telemedicine approach as a study intervention or assessed telemedicine as a subspecialty of pediatric care found that telemedicine services for the general public and pediatric care are comparable to or better than in-person services.[10] Use of telemedicine as remote, technology-based access to clinical services in HIV care is growing and has been shown to achieve similar outcomes as those associated with in-person care.[11] People with HIV on ART achieve similar clinical responses to therapy, adherence to treatment, quality-of-life scores, and psychological and emotional status, whether treated through telemedicine or in person.[12-15]

When selecting the format for clinical follow-up, it is important to recognize differences and similarities between in-person and telemedicine visits (see Table 4 below). The benefits of telemedicine visits include patient and caregiver convenience, lack of travel, flexibility, and ability to visualize ART handling/swallowing and conduct directly observed therapy in the home setting. Telemedicine visits, however, require technological access and capacity and limit the provider's ability to conduct physical examinations and obtain laboratory testing on site,[11-13] as well as to perform periodic measurements of body weight, which are important for dose modification in rapidly growing infants, and to monitor for excessive weight gain as a possible AE of some ARVs. Cooperative children can be weighed and have their height measured at home if a scale and measuring tape are available, with simple instructions for continuity, or directly observed during a synchronous visit or obtained from a recent pediatric or other specialty in-office visit.[16] Additionally, providers need to arrange and coordinate access to the laboratory testing and be familiar with state and local requirements for carrying out, documenting, and billing telemedicine visits. Although both in-person and telemedicine visits involve considerations for stigma, privacy, and confidentiality, these considerations differ between health care and home/community-based settings. For example, the caregiver who has not disclosed the HIV and ART status of the child at home might prefer in-person visits at the clinic or specific hours and/or alternative locations for a telemedicine visit.

Table 4. Characteristics and Requirements for In-Person Clinic Visits vs. Telemedicine Visits

	In-Person Visits	Telemedicine Visits
Patient/caregiver convenience		✓
Flexibility (time and locations) of appointments		✓
Confidentiality concerns	✓	✓
Directly observed therapy in home settings		✓
Physical assessment (e.g., skin rashes)	✓	✓
Physical exam, including weight and height	✓	✓[a]
Adherence support and counseling	✓	✓
Mental health assessment and counseling	✓	✓
Multidisciplinary support (assessment and coordination of nutritional and social services)	✓	✓
Laboratory testing on site	✓	
Travel to clinic	✓	

Table 4. Characteristics and Requirements for In-Person Clinic Visits vs. Telemedicine Visits

	In-Person Visits	Telemedicine Visits
Technology requirements (e.g., internet access, equipment, skills)		✓
Legal and administrative guidelines for visit documentation and billing	✓	✓

[a] Cooperative children can be weighed and have their height measured at home if a scale and measuring tape are available, with simple instructions for continuity, or directly observed during a synchronous visit or obtained from a recent pediatric or other specialty in-office visit.

Within 2 Weeks of Initiating Antiretroviral Therapy

Within 2 weeks of initiating ART, children should be evaluated either in person, through telemedicine, or by telephone. During this evaluation, clinicians should identify clinical AEs and provide support for adherence. Many clinicians plan additional contacts (in person, through telemedicine, by telephone, or via email/texts/apps) with children and caregivers to support adherence during the first few weeks of therapy.

Two to 4 Weeks After Initiating Antiretroviral Therapy

Most experts recommend performing laboratory testing at 2 to 4 weeks (but no later than 8 weeks) after initiating ART to assess virologic response and laboratory toxicities, although this recommendation is based on limited data. The laboratory chemistry tests that a patient requires will depend on the ARV regimen that the patient is receiving (see Table 6 below). Plasma viral load monitoring is important as a marker of response to ART because a decline in viral load suggests that the patient is adherent to the regimen, that the appropriate doses are being administered, and that the virus is susceptible to the drugs in the regimen. Some experts favor measuring viral load at 2 weeks to ensure that viral load is declining. A significant decrease in viral load should be observed 4 to 8 weeks after initiation of ART.

Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring for Children Who Are Stable on Long-Term Antiretroviral Therapy

After the initial phase of ART initiation (1–3 months), clinicians should assess a patient's adherence to the regimen and the regimen's effectiveness (as measured by CD4 count and plasma viral load) every 3 to 4 months. Physical exam, growth, development, and sexual maturity rating should be evaluated at each visit. Children with perinatal HIV may have comorbidities from prolonged infection related to growth and cardiovascular and metabolic health[17]. Delayed growth and pubertal development in children with HIV has been associated with pre-ART viral loads, time of ART initiation, and dyslipidemia.[18-21] There is growing evidence of cardiometabolic comorbidities in youth with perinatal HIV, including left ventricular dysfunction and insulin resistance. These comorbidities are partially attributed to ARV drug exposures but are also associated with viremia and chronic HIV.[17, 22-24] However, data are insufficient to recommend routine screening other than lipid monitoring. See Dyslipidemia and Insulin Resistance, Asymptomatic Hyperglycemia, and Diabetes Mellitus for more information.

Table 6 below provides one proposed general monitoring schedule, which should be adjusted based on the specific ARV regimen that a child is receiving.

Additionally, clinicians should review a patient's history of drug toxicities and evaluate each patient for any new AEs using physical examinations and the relevant laboratory tests. Generally, if

laboratory evidence of toxicity is identified, testing should be performed more frequently until the toxicity resolves, but specific management is guided by the degree of toxicity and ARV regimen. Tables 17a–17k in Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance provide information about specific toxicities associated with ARV drugs.

A patient's baseline CD4 count and age at ART initiation affects how rapidly CD4 count improves after ART initiation; children with very low CD4 counts may take longer than 1 year to achieve their highest values after viral load suppression.[25, 26] Studies that have critically evaluated the frequency of laboratory monitoring in both adults and children, particularly CD4 count and plasma viral load, support less frequent monitoring in stable patients who have been consistently virologically suppressed for ≥1 year.[27-33]

The Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines—Laboratory Testing currently supports performing plasma viral load testing every 6 months for individuals who have both consistent virologic suppression ≥2 years *and* CD4 counts that are consistently >300 cells/mm^3. The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV finds value in continuing to perform viral load testing every 3 to 4 months to provide enhanced monitoring of adherence or disease progression among children and adolescents. Some experts monitor CD4 count less frequently (e.g., every 6–12 months) in children and adolescents who are adherent to therapy, who have CD4 count values well above the threshold for OI risk, and who have had sustained virologic suppression and stable clinical status for more than 2 years.[34] Furthermore, some experts monitor viral load more often (with each injection) in adolescents receiving injectable cabotegravir and rilpivirine.[35]

Testing at the Time of Switching Antiretroviral Regimens

When a patient switches regimens to simplify ART, clinicians should obtain the appropriate laboratory test results at baseline for the toxicity profile of the new regimen. Follow-up should include a measurement of plasma viral load at 4 weeks (and not >8 weeks) after the switch to ensure that the new regimen is effective. If the regimen is switched because the regimen is failing (see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure), genotypic resistance testing should be performed while a patient is still receiving the failing regimen. This optimizes the chance of identifying resistance mutations, because resistant strains may revert to wild type within a few weeks of stopping ARV drugs (see Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). Clinicians should consider performing phenotypic resistance testing, including co-receptor tropism testing, in addition to genotypic viral resistance testing in children who have experienced prolonged or repeated periods of viral nonsuppression on multiple ARV regimens.[36] Phenotypic resistance testing should be considered in addition to genotypic resistance testing for patients with known or suspected complex drug resistance mutation patterns, which generally arise after a patient has experienced virologic failure on multiple ARV regimens. Viral co-receptor tropism assays are recommended whenever a CCR5 antagonist is being considered for treatment. The use of tropism assays also should be considered for patients who demonstrate virologic failure while receiving therapy that contains a CCR5 antagonist (see Co-Receptor Tropism Assays in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines).

Immunologic Monitoring in Children: General Considerations

When interpreting CD4 counts and percentages in children, clinicians must consider age as a factor. CD4 count and percentage values in healthy infants without HIV are considerably higher than values observed in adults without HIV; these infant values slowly decline to adult values by age 5 years (see Table 5 below).[3]

Table 5. CD4 Cell Counts and Percentages in Healthy Children: Distribution by Age

	Age						
	0–3 Months	3–6 Months	6–12 Months	1–2 Years	2–6 Years	6–12 Years	12–18 Years
CD4 Cell Count[a,b]	2,600 (1,600–4,000)	2,850 (1,800–4,000)	2,670 (1,400–4,300)	2,160 (1,300–3,400)	1,380 (700–2,200)	980 (650–1,500)	840 (530–1,300)
CD4 Percentage[a,c]	52 (35–64)	46 (35–56)	46 (31–56)	41 (32–51)	38 (28–47)	37 (31–47)	41 (31–52)

[a] Values presented as median (10th to 90th percentile)

[b] n = 699

[c] n = 709

Source: Shearer WT, Rosenblatt HM, Gelman RS, et al. Lymphocyte subsets in healthy children from birth through 18 years of age: the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group P1009 study. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2003;112(5):973-980.

The current pediatric HIV disease classification is based on absolute CD4 count, which is the preferred assay for monitoring and estimating the risk for disease progression and OIs[37] (see Table A. HIV Infection Stage Based on Age-Specific CD4 Count or Percentage in Appendix C: CDC Pediatric HIV CD4 Cell Count/Percentage and HIV-Related Diseases Categorization). However, some clinicians find it useful to monitor CD4 percentages because they remain relatively consistent, whereas absolute CD4 counts vary with age and changes in total leukocyte counts. CD4 counts and percentages are best measured when patients are clinically stable, as several factors, including mild intercurrent illness and exercise, can transiently decrease levels.[38] Low CD4 values should be confirmed by a repeat test at least 1 week after the first test to inform clinical decisions.

CD4 count and percentage decline as HIV infection progresses; patients with lower CD4 counts or percentage values have a poorer prognosis than patients with higher values (see Table A, Table B, and Table C in Appendix D: Supplemental Information). Children with higher baseline CD4 percentages, younger ages (<4 years), or early ART initiation[39] can potentially recover normal CD4 counts, whereas children with severe baseline immune suppression may not achieve normal CD4 levels with ART.[40-42] Although CD4 cells decline as a result of HIV infection, CD8 T lymphocyte (CD8) cells expand soon after infection. In adults with HIV, low CD4/CD8 ratios are a prognostic indicator for serious non-AIDS events.[43] In children with perinatal HIV, the CD4/CD8 ratio inversely correlates with immune activation, senescence, and exhaustion.[43] Some clinicians find CD4/CD8 ratios useful for gauging overall immune dysfunction. Guidelines recommend that all people with HIV receive ART, regardless of their CD4 count and clinical stage. However, CD4 counts are used to determine HIV stage, potential for immunologic recovery, and when to initiate or stop OI prophylaxis (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection).

HIV RNA Monitoring in Children: General Considerations

Quantitative HIV RNA assays measure the plasma concentration of HIV RNA as copies/mL. Without therapy, plasma viral load initially rises to peak level during the period of primary infection in adults and adolescents and then declines by as much as 2 to 3 $\log_{10}$ copies to reach a stable lower level (the virologic set point) approximately 6 to 12 months after acute infection.[44, 45] In adults with HIV, the virologic set point correlates with the subsequent risk of disease progression or death in the absence of therapy.[46]

The pattern of change in plasma viral load in untreated infants with perinatal HIV differs from that in adults and adolescents with HIV. In the absence of treatment, plasma viral load peaks by age 2 months and remains high until 12 months, and then slowly declines until age 4 to 5 years.[47-48, 49] This pattern probably reflects the lower efficiency of a developing immune system in containing viral replication.[50]

Despite the established association between high plasma viral load and disease progression, a specific HIV RNA concentration has only moderate predictive value for disease progression and death in an individual child.[51] In both children and adults with HIV, CD4 count or percentage and plasma viral load are independent predictors of disease progression and mortality risk, and using the two markers together more accurately defines prognosis.[51-55]

Methodological Considerations When Interpreting and Comparing HIV RNA Assays

Based on accumulated experience with currently available assays, the current definition of virologic suppression is a plasma viral load that is below the quantification limit of the assay used (generally <20 copies/mL to 75 copies/mL) (see Table 7 below). This definition of suppression has been much more thoroughly investigated in adults with HIV than in children with HIV (see the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). Temporary viral load elevations ("blips") are often detected in adults on ART[56] and generally defined as up to 200 copies/mL, but they may be as high as 500 copies/mL in children on ART[57]; these temporary elevations do not represent virologic failure as long as the values have returned to below the level of detection when testing is repeated. For definitions and management of virologic treatment failure, see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure. These definitions of virologic suppression and virologic failure are recommended for clinical use. Research protocols or surveillance programs may use different definitions.

Several different methods can be used for quantitating HIV RNA, each of which has a different level of sensitivity (see Table 7 below). Because different assays use different methods to measure HIV RNA, and because the tests have different levels of sensitivity, clinicians should consistently use a single HIV RNA assay method to monitor an individual patient when possible.[58-60] Moreover, because of biologic variability, only differences >0.7 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL (a fivefold difference) in infants aged <2 years and differences >0.5 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL (a threefold difference) in children aged ≥2 years should be considered as clinically significant plasma viral load changes.

The predominant HIV-1 subtype in the United States is subtype B, and early assays were designed to detect this subtype. Current kit configurations for all companies have been designed to detect and quantitate essentially all viral subtypes (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children). This ability is important in many regions of the world where non-B subtypes are predominant, as well as in the United States for immigrant and adopted children who are born outside the United States or to non–U.S.-born parents.[58, 61-64]

Genetic Testing for Management of HIV

Modern disease intervention strategies often employ genetic testing to evaluate the genes of humans and pathogens. This approach to treatment is an important component in the rise of precision medicine. Clinicians who manage HIV have routinely probed HIV genetic sequences for mutations that are associated with HIV drug resistance. Some ARV drugs are metabolized differently based on specific human genotypes. For example, studies have shown that certain genotypes can affect efavirenz exposure in young children.[65-68] In addition, some human genetic polymorphisms are associated with

drug toxicity or AEs (e.g., using HLA-B*5701 testing to predict ABC hypersensitivity)[69]; for more information, see the Abacavir section in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information. Future clinical practice will likely feature broader applications of multiple forms of genetic testing to guide management of health and disease.

Table 6. Sample Schedule for Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Children Before and After Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy[a]

Laboratory Testing	Entry Into Care[a,b]	ART Initiation[c]	Weeks 1–2 on Therapy	Weeks 2–4 on Therapy	Every 3–4 Months[d]	Every 6–12 Months[d]	Virologic Failure (Prior to Switching ARV Regimens)
Medical History and Physical Examination[e,f]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Adherence Evaluation[f]		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
CD4 Count[d]	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Plasma Viral Load[g]	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Resistance Testing	✓						✓
CBC With Differential[d]	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Chemistries[d,h]	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lipid Panel[i]	✓	✓				✓	
Random Plasma Glucose[j]		✓				✓	
Urinalysis	✓	✓				✓	
HBV Screening[k]	✓						✓
Pregnancy Test for Youth and Young Adults of Childbearing Potential[l]	✓	✓					✓
HLA-B*5701[m]	✓						
HCV Screening[n]	✓						
TB Screening[o]	✓					✓	
CMV Antibody Testing[p]	✓					✓	

[a] See the texts on immunologic, virologic, general laboratory, and clinical monitoring of children with HIV for details on recommended laboratory tests to perform.

[b] If a child does not initiate ART after receiving an HIV diagnosis, the child's CD4 count and plasma viral load should be monitored at least every 3 to 4 months.

Table 6. Sample Schedule for Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Children Before and After Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

[c] If ART is initiated within 30 to 90 days of a pre-therapy laboratory result, repeat testing may not be necessary.

[d] CD4 count, CBC, and chemistries can be monitored less frequently (every 6–12 months) in children and youth who are adherent to therapy, who have CD4 count values that are well above the threshold for opportunistic infection risk, and who have had sustained virologic suppression and stable clinical status for more than 2 to 3 years. Viral load testing every 3 to 4 months is generally recommended to monitor ARV adherence.

[e] Pay special attention to changes in weight that might occur after altering an ARV regimen. Weight gain or weight loss may occur when using some ARV drugs (see Table 17h. Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain).

[f] Virtual visits may be appropriate at some time points, particularly for adherence assessments and for visits for established patients, see Table 4 above.

[g] Some experts monitor viral load more often (with each injection) in adolescents initiating long-acting injectable CAB and RPV (LA CAB/RPV). Viral load monitoring should be performed 4 to 8 weeks after a switch to LA CAB/RPV. HIV RNA also should be checked in patients with unplanned missed visits and delayed dosing of LA CAB/RPV. When viremia develops during long-acting therapy, resistance testing, including integrase resistance testing, should be performed. Follow-up dosing in patients with missed doses should not be delayed while waiting for viral load and resistance test results. However, regimen changes should be prompted if resistance to CAB and/or RPV is discovered (see Optimizing Antiretroviral Therapy in the Setting of Viral Suppression in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines).

[h] Chemistries refer to a comprehensive metabolic panel. Some experts perform a comprehensive panel at entry and routinely test Cr, ALT, AST, with additional tests tailored to the history of the individual patient.

[i] If lipid levels have been abnormal in the past, more frequent monitoring may be needed. For patients treated with TDF, more frequent urinalysis should be considered.

[j] Random plasma glucose is collected in a gray-top blood collection tube or other designated tube. Some experts would consider monitoring HgbA1C, rather than routine blood glucose, in children at risk for prediabetes/diabetes.

[k] Baseline HBV screening is recommended with HBsAb, HBsAg, and HBcAb. HBV screening is also recommended for individuals who have previously demonstrated no immunity to HBV and who are initiating a regimen that contains ARV drugs with activity against HBV, specifically 3TC, FTC, TAF, or TDF.

[l] See the Prepregnancy Counseling and Care in the Perinatal Guidelines.

[m] Conduct HLA-B*5701 on entry or prior to initiating ABC if not done previously. Choose an alternative ARV drug if the patient is HLA-B*5701 positive (see the Abacavir section in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information).

[n] Baseline hepatitis C screening is recommended with HCV nucleic acid (HCV RNA) testing if aged <18 months or hepatitis C antibody if aged ≥18 months. If HCV testing is positive, refer to the Infectious Diseases Society of America HCV in Children guidelines for management.

[o] TB screening is recommended at baseline and annually with tuberculin skin test if aged <2 years or interferon gamma release assay if aged ≥2 years (see *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines).

[p] CMV antibody testing is recommended at age 1 year (or at baseline evaluation if aged >1 year at initial visit) and then annually for CMV-seronegative infants and children with HIV who are immunosuppressed (i.e., CD4 count <100 cells/mm^3 or CD4 percentage <10%). Severely immunosuppressed children with HIV who are CMV seropositive should have ophthalmologic screening for CMV retinitis. Some experts consider routine ophthalmologic screening in CMV seropositive children with HIV until they are old enough to report visual symptoms (see Cytomegalovirus in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines).

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ALT = alanine aminotransferase; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; AST = aspartate aminotransferase; CAB = cabotegravir; CBC = complete blood count; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; CMV = cytomegalovirus; Cr = creatinine; FTC = emtricitabine; HBV = hepatitis B virus; HBsAb = HBV surface antibody; HBsAg = HBV surface antigen; HBcAb = HBV core antibody; HCV = hepatitis C virus; HgbA1C = glycosylated hemoglobin; RPV = rilpivirine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TB = tuberculosis; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

Table 7. Primary U.S. Food and Drug Administration–Approved Assays for Monitoring Viral Load

Assay	Abbott Real Time	NucliSens EasyQ v2.0	COBAS AmpliPrep/ TaqMan v2.0	Versant v1.0	Aptima HIV-1 Quant Assay
Method	Real-time RT-PCR	Real-time NASBA	Real-time RT-PCR	Real-time RT-PCR	Real-time TMA
Dynamic Range	40–10^7 copies/mL	25–10^7 copies/mL	20–10^7 copies/mL	37–11×10^7 copies/mL	30–10^7 copies/mL
Specimen Volume[a]	0.2–1 mL	0.1–1 mL	1 mL	0.5 mL	≥0.4 mL
Manufacturer	Abbott Laboratories	bioMérieux	Roche	Siemens	Hologic, Inc.

[a] Laboratories often request large blood volumes for standard viral load testing. Consider contacting the local laboratory to determine minimum blood volume required to run the assay. Smaller volumes for children can be accommodated.

Key: NASBA = nucleic acid sequence–based amplification; RT-PCR = reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction; TMA = transcription-mediated amplification

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When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection

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Panel's Recommendations
• Antiretroviral therapy (ART) should be initiated in all infants and children with HIV infection (AI for children aged <3 months, AI* for older children). o Rapid ART initiation (defined as initiating ART immediately or within days of HIV diagnosis), accompanied by a discussion of the importance of adherence and provision of subsequent adherence support, is recommended for all children with HIV (AI*). o However, in ART-naive children and adolescents with cryptococcal meningitis, tuberculous meningitis, and disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex disease, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends initiation of treatment for the opportunistic infection first, before ART initiation (see Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Opportunistic Infections in Children With and Exposed to HIV) (AII). The timing of ART initiation in these cases should be discussed with a pediatric HIV specialist. • If a child with HIV has not initiated ART, health care providers should closely monitor the virologic, immunologic, and clinical status at least every 3 to 4 months (AIII). o ART initiation should be discussed and strongly encouraged at every visit (AIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *†Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Overview

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends initiating treatment for all children with HIV as soon as is feasible after diagnosis. Multiple studies have shown a benefit to early antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation[1-3] and that ART initiation within the first year of life is associated with reduced size of viral reservoirs.[4] Treatment initiation in young infants with HIV during the early stages of infection may control viral replication before HIV can evolve into diverse and potentially more pathogenic quasi-species.[5] Initiation of therapy at higher CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts has been associated with the presence of fewer drug-resistant mutations at virologic failure in adults.[6] Early therapy has also been shown to preserve immune function and prevent clinical disease progression in perinatal infection[7-9] and may prevent or reduce persistent inflammation, a precipitant of cardiovascular, kidney, and liver disease and malignancy.[10,11]

Rapid treatment initiation, defined as therapy initiated immediately or within days of HIV diagnosis, is recommended except in children with cryptococcal meningitis, tuberculous meningitis, and disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex disease. Due to concerns regarding the risk of immune

reconstitution inflammatory syndrome, ART initiation may be deferred briefly until the optimal timing relative to treatment of these opportunistic infections. Timing of ART initiation in these cases should be discussed with a pediatric HIV specialist (see Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Opportunistic Infections in Children With and Exposed to HIV). A retrospective review of children and adolescents with HIV in six African countries between 2013 and 2020 showed that there was no mortality difference if ART was initiated <2 weeks (n = 266) versus 2 weeks to 2 months (n = 398) after starting anti-tuberculous therapy for pulmonary tuberculosis (TB).[12] This finding supporting ART initiation in children and adolescents with HIV within the first 2 weeks of treatment for TB is consistent with World Health Organization Updated Recommendations on HIV Prevention, Infant Diagnosis, Antiretroviral Initiation and Monitoring, March 2021,[13] which advocate for ART initiation within 2 weeks of TB treatment initiation for infants and children, except when signs and symptoms of meningitis are present. In the case of tuberculous meningitis, the Panel recommends initiating ART within 2 to 8 weeks of TB treatment initiation, depending on clinical considerations and in consultation with a pediatric HIV specialist (see Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Opportunistic Infections in Children With and Exposed to HIV).

Although rapid initiation of ART is recommended in all children with HIV, individual clinical and/or psychosocial factors may lead patients, caregivers, and providers to make a collaborative decision to defer ART initiation. When making the decision to defer ART, medical factors—such as the opportunity to limit seeding of the viral reservoir in newborns, the child's HIV disease stage,[14] and the presence of HIV-related signs and symptoms[15]—need to be balanced against any potential barriers to rapid ART initiation. If ART is deferred, the health care provider should continue to educate and work with the family to overcome barriers to treatment, as well as closely monitor the child's virologic, immunologic, and clinical status at least every 3 to 4 months; more frequent monitoring may be needed in infants or young children ≤4 years of age given the higher mortality risk in this age group **(AIII)** (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection). Clinicians should initiate ART in children with HIV for whom treatment has been deferred when at least one of the following conditions occur:

- HIV RNA levels increase
- CD4 count or percentage values decline (e.g., approaching Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Stage 2 or 3) (see Appendix C. CDC Pediatric HIV CD4 Cell Count/Percentage and HIV-Related Disease Categorization)[14]
- The child develops new HIV-related clinical symptoms (see Appendix C. CDC Pediatric HIV CD4 Cell Count/Percentage and HIV-Related Disease Categorization)[15]
- The ability of a caregiver and child to adhere to the prescribed regimen improves

Survival Associated With Early Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

The Children with HIV Early Antiretroviral Therapy (CHER) trial was a randomized clinical trial in South Africa that initiated ART in infants with HIV who were aged 6 to 12 weeks and were asymptomatic with normal CD4 percentages (>25%). Immediately initiating ART resulted in a 75% reduction in early mortality among these infants compared with delaying treatment until the infants met clinical or immune criteria according to the standard of care at the time of the study.[2] Consistent with the CHER trial, data from a number of observational studies in the United States, Europe, and South Africa demonstrated that infants who received early treatment were less likely to progress to AIDS or death, and these infants also had improved growth and lower morbidity compared with those who started treatment later.[16-20]

Health Benefits Associated With Early Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

In general, studies that evaluate later initiation of ART in children have a selection bias: children with perinatal infection and rapidly progressing disease may have died prior to receiving an HIV diagnosis or ART, and children who present later for ART initiation may be slower progressors with a better prognosis. However, multiple studies have demonstrated the benefits of early ART initiation across several health outcomes.

Growth Outcomes

In the multicenter, open-label Pediatric Randomised Early versus Deferred Initiation in Cambodia and Thailand (PREDICT) trial, which randomized 300 children with HIV aged 1 year to 12 years at enrollment (median age 6.4 years) to immediately initiate ART or to defer treatment until their CD4 percentage was <15%, better gain in height among children who started ART immediately was reported.[21] Similarly, other studies have reported an association between younger age at initiation of ART and more rapid growth reconstitution.[17,22-24] Studies[16-20,25] conducted in and outside the United States have reported an association between delayed ART initiation and delay of pubertal development and menarche.[26]

Immune Outcomes

A proteomics study of children who initiated ART early (within 12 weeks of birth) versus later (12–50 weeks after birth) identified a protein signature among later initiators associated with a proinflammatory state. This proinflammatory state was associated with elevated lipid levels and other metabolites and clinical parameters, suggestive of a higher risk of premature onset of atherosclerotic disease and metabolic disorders in adulthood.[10] A longitudinal study found that early ART initiation (≤6 months of age) compared with later ART initiation (>6 months and <2 years of age) was associated with decreased inflammatory cytokines and chemokines 12.5 years after ART initiation, despite both groups achieving and maintaining virologic suppression (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 5 years at study enrollment.[27]

Cardiopulmonary Outcomes

A cross-sectional study from Mozambique found that earlier age at ART initiation was independently associated with improved large artery elasticity in childhood, as measured by pulse wave velocity, independent of the effect of elevated visceral fat, lipids, and insulin resistance.[11] Regarding lung health, although multiple studies have demonstrated poor pulmonary function among children with perinatal HIV infection,[28-30] a longitudinal study in South Africa found that among 122 children with HIV who were promptly initiated on ART (median age 4.0 months), lung function trajectories throughout childhood demonstrated similar spirometry to children without HIV who were not HIV-exposed (n = 80), highlighting that early ART can mitigate the loss of lung function in children with perinatal HIV. Plethysmography, however, demonstrated increased air trapping in children with HIV, suggesting that there remains a concern for small airway disease in this group.[31]

Neurodevelopmental Outcomes

Early infant initiation of ART has been associated with improved neurodevelopmental outcomes compared with later initiation of ART. Examples include a CHER trial substudy in which infants who initiated ART early had significantly better gross motor and neurodevelopmental profiles than those whose therapy was deferred.[32] Additionally, in a cohort from Thailand, the prevalence of global developmental impairment was 22% (95% confidence interval [CI], 11% to 27%) among children

with HIV who initiated ART within 3 months of birth compared with 44% (95% CI, 23% to 66%) among children who initiated ART from ages 3 to 12 months.[33] Among Kenyan children with HIV who initiated ART within 1 year of birth (early ART; n = 54) versus 1.5 to 6 years after birth (late ART; n = 27) between 2007 and 2009 and were prospectively assessed for neurocognitive outcomes at a median age of 6.9 years, the children with later ART initiation had significantly higher odds of impairment in global cognition, short-term memory, visuospatial processing, learning, planning, nonverbal test performance, and motor skills (adjusted odds ratios 2.87–16.22; *P* values ≤ 0.05).[34] Lastly, a study of South African infants with perinatally acquired HIV (PHIV) who initiated ART within 21 days of life (median 6 days) found that neurodevelopmental scores at approximately 11.5 months of age were within the normal range for age in the domains of locomotor, personal–social, hearing and language, and visual–motor.[35]

Other Health Outcomes

Although research on epigenetic aging among adolescents with HIV has been limited, a longitudinal study of 40 children from the Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study (PHACS) —including 32 children with PHIV and 8 children without HIV who had perinatal HIV exposure—evaluated epigenetic aging (via DNA methylation) compared to chronologic aging over time. Children with PHIV experienced an increased rate of epigenetic aging compared with children without HIV. In those with PHIV, higher viral load and lower CD4 count were associated with accelerated epigenetic aging, emphasizing the importance of early and sustained suppressive treatment for children with PHIV.[36]

Immune Benefits Associated With Early Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

In the CHER study, infants who were treated early had decreased immune activation, greater recovery of CD4 cells, expanded CD4-naive T cells, and retention of innate effector frequencies, resulting in greater immune reconstitution than that achieved in infants who received deferred ART.[9] The IMPAACT 1115 Phase 1/2 proof-of-concept study of very early ART initiation began treatment of 54 infants within 10 days of birth. CD4 counts were ≥1,500 cells/mm^3, and CD4 percentages were ≥25% among 84% of infants at 24 weeks after treatment initiation and among 80% of infants at 48 weeks after treatment initiation.[37] In a small study in Botswana, infants who initiated ART within the first 7 days of life were found to have decreased immune activation, a more polyfunctional HIV-1–specific CD8 cell response, and a markedly reduced HIV latent reservoir compared with infants who initiated ART later in the first year of life.[38] Available data suggest that both children and adults who initiate treatment with a higher CD4 percentage or CD4 count have better immune recovery than individuals who initiate treatment with lower CD4 percentages or CD4 counts.[23,39-41] Among 1,236 children with PHIV in the United States, only 36% of those who started ART with CD4 percentages <15% achieved CD4 percentages >25% after 5 years of therapy compared with 59% of children who started with CD4 percentages of 15% to 24%.[42] Finally, earlier age at ART initiation results in higher rates of CD4:CD8 ratio normalization and improved immunogenicity of childhood vaccines.[43-45]

Early initiation of suppressive ART (i.e., in infants aged <6 months) results in a significant proportion of infants with HIV who fail to produce their own HIV-specific antibodies. These infants appear to be HIV seronegative when tested; however, viral reservoirs remain, and viral rebound occurs if ART is stopped.[46-51]

Viral Suppression and Viral Reservoirs With Early Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy

Early initiation of ART within the first 7 days of life, compared with initiation between 8 and 28 days of life, resulted in a fourfold faster time to viral suppression among infants in a multinational study.[52] Studies that compared the size of viral reservoirs in children who initiated ART before age 12 weeks with those in children who initiated ART at ≥12 weeks to ≤2 years of age found that viral reservoir size after 1 year and 4 years of ART significantly correlated with younger age at ART initiation and younger age at viral control.[53-55] Among 27 children in the Early-treated Perinatally HIV-infected Individuals: Improving Children's Actual Life with Novel Immunotherapeutic Strategies (EPIICAL) Consortium who initiated ART before 2 years of age and maintained a viral load <50 copies/mL for more than 5 years, total HIV-1 DNA levels measured at a median of 12 years after treatment initiation were reduced (interquartile range 7.3–15.4), with both younger age and viral load at the time of ART initiation associated with lower reservoir levels.[56] In the CHER study, early ART initiation and longer duration of ART were associated with lower proviral DNA levels at 5 years of age.[57] Among adolescents with PHIV in Cameroon, lower HIV proviral DNA levels were associated with ART initiation before 1 year of age.[58] In the Early Infant Treatment Study in Botswana, 40 infants initiated ART at a median 2 days of life, with 2 infants dying within 12 to 24 weeks of treatment initiation. Low HIV reservoirs were noted among the 38 who survived to 96 weeks, even though most infants experienced periods of detectable HIV-1 RNA between 24 to 96 weeks. Low pre-ART reservoir size was predictive of preserved CD4 count and low viral reservoirs.[59] A meta-analysis of 49 studies (including some of those highlighted above) from 17 countries, which included 2,356 children and adolescents with PHIV infection, found that initiating ART before 2 months of age limited viral reservoir size as measured by HIV-1 DNA ($P = 0.054$).[60]

These findings suggest that initiating ART soon after an infant acquires HIV can limit the size of the HIV viral reservoir, and smaller reservoirs may provide some level of protection against viral rebound in the setting of treatment nonadherence—a frequent event for infants with HIV who are destined for lifelong treatment. Furthermore, very low levels of markers of HIV persistence have been reported in infants who initiated ART early and who had sustained control of plasma viremia.[46,61,62]

The report of prolonged remission in a child with PHIV in Mississippi generated discussion about early initiation of ART as presumptive treatment in newborns at high risk of HIV acquisition.[63,64] Five additional children have experienced prolonged remission following early ART initiation. A child from the CHER study received ART between 2 and 10 months of age and in 2019, at the age of 9.5 years, had HIV-1 detectable only at very low levels (plasma RNA 6.6 copies/mL) and no detectable replication-competent virus.[65] A French child was treated with ART from 3 months of age through approximately 6 years of age; in 2016, at 18.6 years of age and still off ART, HIV RNA had remained below 50 copies/mL with stable CD4 counts.[66] In the IMPAACT P1115 clinical trial, 54 children with *in utero* HIV infection initiated preemptive ART or three-drug ART prophylaxis within 48 hours of birth. Of those who maintained sustained HIV viral suppression beyond 48 weeks of ART, six met criteria to undergo analytical treatment interruption (ATI) at a median age of 5.5 years; one achieved prolonged aviremia through 80 weeks of ATI before viral rebound, and three remained virologically suppressed during ATI at >44 weeks, >48 weeks, and >60 weeks, respectively, at the time of the report.[67] Two children experienced early viral rebound at 3 and 8 weeks, respectively. While these findings hold promise for some early-treated children with HIV, the fact that only 11% of the participants were eligible for ATI highlights the need for further pediatric cure and remission research.

These experiences have prompted increasing support for initiating treatment as soon as the diagnosis is made and, if possible, during the first weeks of life to limit reservoir formation and possibly facilitate ART-free remission. Although a limited number of case reports describe lengthy remissions in children with PHIV who have undergone treatment interruption, current ART has not been shown to eradicate HIV infection because HIV persists in CD4 cells and other long-lived cells.[65,66,68,69] For these reasons, the Panel **does not recommend empiric treatment interruption** outside of a clinical trial setting.

Managing treatment in neonates with HIV is complex from a medical and social perspective. Because of limited safety and pharmacokinetic data for antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in full-term infants aged <2 weeks and preterm infants aged ≤4 weeks, drug and dose selection in this age group is challenging[70,71] (see What to Start and Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Hepatic and renal function are immature in newborns who are undergoing rapid maturational changes during the first few months of life, which can result in substantial differences in ARV dose requirements between young infants and older children.[72,73] When drug concentrations are subtherapeutic—because of inadequate dosing, poor absorption, or incomplete adherence—ARV drug resistance can develop rapidly, particularly in young infants who experience high levels of viral replication. Frequent follow-up for dose optimization during periods of rapid growth is especially important when treating young infants. Furthermore, clinicians should continually assess an individual's adherence and address potential barriers to adherence during this time (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV).

Optimizing Antiretroviral Therapy Adherence at Initiation

In preparation for ART initiation, it is important to assess and discuss issues associated with adherence with caregivers and, when developmentally appropriate, with children. Intensive follow-up during the first few weeks to months after ART initiation is also recommended to support the child and caregiver. Medication adherence is the core requirement for successful virologic control (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV). The Panel recognizes that achieving consistent adherence in children is often challenging.[74,75] Incomplete adherence leads to loss of viral control and the selection of drug-resistant mutations, but forcibly administrating ARV drugs to younger children may result in treatment aversion, which often persists into adulthood.

Summary

The Panel recommends rapid initiation of ART (defined as initiating ART immediately or within days of HIV diagnosis) for all children who receive an HIV diagnosis, regardless of clinical, immunologic, or virologic status, given the multiple health benefits and potential for minimal HIV viral reservoir size when treatment of initiation occurs within days of birth for infants who are diagnosed with HIV at birth. The urgency of rapid ART initiation is especially critical for children aged <1 year who carry the highest risk of rapid disease progression and mortality. However, in ART-naive children and adolescents with cryptococcal meningitis, tuberculous meningitis, or disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex disease, the Panel recommends initiation of treatment for the opportunistic infection first, before ART initiation (see Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Opportunistic Infections in Children With and Exposed to HIV). Timing of ART initiation in these cases should be discussed with a pediatric HIV specialist.

Finally, readiness for good ART adherence should be considered when preparing to initiate ART, as this is the core requirement for successful virologic control. It is important to assess and discuss issues associated with adherence with caregivers and, when developmentally appropriate, with

children (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV). If it is determined that social or emotional challenges will prevent consistent medication adherence, ART initiation may be briefly delayed to address these barriers. If any child with HIV has not initiated ART, health care providers should closely monitor the virologic, immunologic, and clinical status at least every 3 to 4 months, and ART initiation should be discussed and strongly encouraged at every visit.

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What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV

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Panel's Recommendations
• The selection of an initial antiretroviral regimen for the treatment of HIV in infants and children should be individualized based on factors that include patient characteristics (e.g., age, weight), regimen characteristics (e.g., efficacy, safety, tolerability), clinical and practical considerations, patient and family preferences, and the results of HIV resistance testing (AIII) (see Table A below and Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). • For infants and children initiating treatment for HIV for the first time, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends initiating antiretroviral therapy (ART) with three drugs: a dual–nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) backbone plus an integrase strand transfer inhibitor anchor drug, when possible. In some circumstances, an ART regimen of two NRTIs plus a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor or a boosted protease inhibitor as the anchor drug may be indicated for initial treatment (AI*). See Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV below.
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Criteria Used for Recommendations

In general, the recommendations of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) are based on reviews of pediatric and adult clinical trial data published in peer-reviewed journals, data prepared by manufacturers for U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review, and data presented in abstract format at major scientific meetings. Few randomized, Phase 3 clinical trials of antiretroviral treatment (ART) regimens have directly compared different treatment regimens in pediatric patients. Most pediatric drug data come from Phase 1/2 safety and pharmacokinetic (PK) trials and nonrandomized, open-label studies. In general, even in studies of adults, assessment of drug efficacy and potency is primarily based on surrogate marker endpoints, such as viral load (plasma HIV RNA concentration) and CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count. The Panel modifies recommendations on optimal initial therapy for children as new data become available, new therapies or drug formulations are developed, and additional toxicities are recognized.

When developing recommendations for specific antiretroviral (ARV) drugs or regimens, the Panel considers the following information:

- Data demonstrating durable viral suppression, immunologic improvement, and clinical improvement (when available) with the drug or regimen, preferably in children. However, if pediatric data are lacking, evidence in adolescents and adults is considered.
- The extent of pediatric experience with a specific drug or regimen.
- The incidence and types of short-term and long-term drug toxicity in people who are taking the drug or regimen, focusing on toxicities that are reported in children.
- The availability and acceptability of formulations that are appropriate for pediatric use, including ease of administration, formulation options (e.g., syrups, powders, or granules vs. chewable tablets vs. pediatric dispersible tablets), palatability, pill size, and number of pills or volume of oral solution needed for an appropriate dose.
- Dosing frequency and food and/or fluid requirements.
- The potential for drug interactions with other medications.

ART regimens recommended for use in children with HIV should generally consist of a backbone of two nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) plus a third active anchor drug from one of the following classes: an integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI), a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI), or a protease inhibitor (PI) with a PK enhancer (also known as a booster; the two drugs used for this purpose are cobicistat [COBI or c] and ritonavir [RTV or r]).

The Panel classifies recommended ARV drugs or ART regimens for **initial** treatment of HIV in infants and children into one of two categories:

Preferred: ARV drugs or drug combinations are designated as *Preferred* for initial ART in infants and children without ART experience when clinical trial data in children or, more often, in adults have demonstrated optimal and durable efficacy and when pediatric studies using surrogate markers have demonstrated safety and appropriate drug exposure. Age and weight requirements, formulations, dosing frequency, potential drug interactions, and other factors are also considered when designating ARV drugs or ART regimens as *Preferred*.

Alternative: Drugs or drug combinations are designated as *Alternative* for initial therapy when clinical trial data in children or adults show efficacy but the drugs or drug combinations have disadvantages when compared with *Preferred* regimens. Drugs or drug combinations may be classified as *Alternative* for use in initial ART regimens in children if they are less effective or durable than a *Preferred* regimen in children or adults; if specific concerns exist about toxicity, dosing, formulation, administration, or interaction; or if experience with the use of these drugs or drug combinations in children is limited.

ARV drugs or regimens that are not recommended for initial ART in children are discussed in What Not to Start: Regimens Not Recommended for Initial Antiretroviral Therapy in Infants and Children. For detailed pediatric information on each drug, see Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information.

Factors to Consider When Selecting an Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimen

ART regimens for infants and children should contain three fully active drugs for durable and potent virologic suppression. When possible, the initial treatment should reflect an option that requires only once-daily dosing and minimizes the number of liquid formulations, dispersible tablets, or pills that must be administered. Therefore, Panel recommendations reflect once-daily ARV regimens and single-tablet regimens whenever feasible.

Panel recommendations about ARV drugs and drug combinations for initial ART regimens in infants and children are influenced by the availability of FDA-approved drugs. FDA drug approvals of pediatric formulations and approvals for the use of adult formulations in children are based on weight but include age limitations for some drugs. Although age can be used as an initial guide when selecting ARV drugs for use in infants and children, body weight is the preferred determinant for drug selection and drug dosing in infants and children. Gestational age at birth and postnatal age must also be considered in the selection of some drugs for infants. Many drugs that are recommended for use in young infants do not have dosing recommendations for infants born prior to 37 weeks of gestational age (i.e., born preterm).

When making recommendations, the Panel considers efficacy and factors affecting the efficacy of a regimen, age and weight requirements, potential toxicity, tolerability, and drug or regimen characteristics that affect administration and adherence (e.g., formulations, pill size, dosing frequency). Table A below summarizes factors to consider when selecting an ART regimen for infants and children. Details about ARV formulations, fixed-dose combinations, dosing, and administration to infants and children are provided in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information. Advantages and disadvantages of ARV components recommended for initial therapy in infants and children are summarized in Table B and Table 9 below. Additional information is provided in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines.

The Panel recommends rapid initiation of ART (defined as initiating ART immediately or within days of diagnosis), accompanied by a discussion about the importance of adherence and provision of adherence support for all children with HIV (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children With HIV Infection and Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV).

Table A. Factors to Consider When Selecting an Antiretroviral Treatment Regimen for Children

Table A. Factors to Consider When Selecting an Antiretroviral Treatment Regimen for Children

Factors to Consider	Key Questions and Comments
Acquired potential drug resistance	Are there any concerns that the child[a] may have HIV virus resistant to certain ARV drugs?
Age and weight	Are dosing, PK, and safety information for an ARV drug available based on the child's weight and age? Are there weight and/or age requirements for ARV drug use per FDA approvals or Panel recommendations, including gestational age and postnatal age requirements? Do efficacy and safety data support the choice of specific ARV drugs as part of an initial ART regimen? Is weight-band dosing information available? Weight-band dosing minimizes the need for frequent dose adjustments.
Available formulations	What drug formulations are available for potential treatment regimens (e.g., liquids, dispersible tablets, film-coated tablets that must be swallowed whole, tablets that can be crushed or split)? If pills are available, what is the pill size? Are multiclass single-tablet regimens available? See Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.
Frequency of dosing	Is a once-daily regimen possible?
Preparation and administration of medication by caregivers	How complicated is preparing the medication(s) needed for the ART regimen? What can be done to ensure that caregivers can safely and accurately administer the medications? Providers should complete the following: • Provide medication counseling with trained medical staff. • Provide correctly sized oral syringes. • For liquids, ensure that bottles include stoppers to minimize spilling and medication wastage. • Provide medication calendars after discussing who will be administering the ART and identifying the most convenient time for administration. • Address any food restrictions or requirements for ARVs to be given with food. • Repeat teaching at each clinic visit.
Palatability and tolerance	How palatable and well-tolerated is the regimen?
Ability to swallow pills	Can this child swallow pills or be taught how to swallow pills? The age that a child can learn the skill of swallowing pills varies. Usually, children aged 4 years and older can be taught to swallow pills.

Table A. Factors to Consider When Selecting an Antiretroviral Treatment Regimen for Children

Factors to Consider	Key Questions and Comments
Drug–drug interactions	Does the child require chronic treatment for any other conditions (e.g., mental health conditions, seizure disorders, tuberculosis)? If so, are there any potential drug interactions? See Drug–Drug Interactions in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.
Contraindications	Are there contraindications to prescribing a specific ARV or ART regimen? For example, a positive HLA-B*5701 allele test result is a contraindication for use of abacavir.
Comorbidities and pregnancy	Are there other factors that can affect ARV choices for the drug regimen? Examples include tuberculosis, hepatitis B virus infection, and, for adolescents, pregnancy.
Toxicity	What are the most common side effects and safety profiles for the ARV(s)? See Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information. Are there specific toxicity or side effect considerations for individual children (e.g., weight gain in children or adolescents who are overweight or obese, depression)?
Availability,[b] cost, and insurance coverage	Are the medications and formulations needed readily available? Some new drugs or pediatric formulations may not be available in certain areas, or concerns may exist about maintaining a continuous supply. Does the child have insurance coverage? Can the family afford out-of-pocket costs (e.g., co-pays)? Does the regimen require prior authorization?

[a] For the sake of brevity, the term "child" encompasses infants, children, and prepubertal adolescents.

[b] Because some ARV medications or pediatric formulations may not be available in certain hospitals or geographic areas, clinicians should check availability and advocate for additions to formularies at local hospitals and/or pharmacies as needed.

Key: ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; HLA = human leukocyte antigen; PK = pharmacokinetic; the Panel = the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV

Panel Recommendations for Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens in Infants and Children

The following subsections group Panel recommendations for initial ART regimens for children, including prepubertal adolescents, with HIV infection according to a child's age (birth to <30 days, ≥30 days to <2 years, ≥2 years to <12 years, and ≥12 years). These guidelines provide recommendations for prepubertal children and adolescents (i.e., those with sexual maturity ratings [SMR] of 1 to 3).[1] The Adult and Adolescent Guidelines address recommendations for postpubertal adolescents (i.e., those with an SMR of 4 and 5); see What to Start. It is important to point out that pediatric approvals for most drugs are now based on specific weight parameters and that weight, rather than SMR, is a key determinant in ARV drug selection.

Preferred regimens for initial ART in infants aged <30 days with HIV-1 infection include an NRTI backbone of two NRTIs plus an INSTI (raltegravir [RAL]) or an NNRTI (nevirapine [NVP]) as the anchor drug. INSTI-based regimens (INSTI plus two NRTIs) are *Preferred* for initial ART in infants

and children aged ≥30 days with HIV-1 infection whenever possible. ***Preferred* anchor drugs,** by age and weight, are listed below with *Alternative* options discussed in subsections by age group:

- Newborns and infants aged <30 days: NVP, regardless of weight, or RAL if weight ≥2 kg; see Table 8 below regarding gestational age considerations.
- Infants and children aged ≥30 days and weighing ≥3 kg: dolutegravir (DTG)
- Children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg: DTG or bictegravir (BIC). BIC is available only as a component of the fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablet BIC/emtricitabine (FTC)/tenofovir alafenamide (TAF).

INSTI-based regimens have become the *Preferred* option for initial ART regimens in infants and children (and adults) whenever possible due to their virologic efficacy, lack of drug interactions, and favorable toxicity profile.[3-6] This pediatric recommendation is consistent with recommendations for initial ART in adults and adolescents (see the What to Start: Initial Combination Antiretroviral Regimens for People With HIV section of the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). Adult comparative trials have shown that INSTI-containing regimens have superior efficacy compared with PI-containing and NNRTI-containing regimens,[7,8] and an increasing number of studies have evaluated the PK, safety, tolerability, and efficacy of these drugs in infants, children, and adolescents (see the Raltegravir, Dolutegravir, and Bictegravir sections).

RAL is a first-generation INSTI and is the only INSTI option approved by the FDA for use in infants aged <30 days. INSTI-based regimens using second-generation INSTIs that have greater efficacy and a higher barrier to resistance than RAL (i.e., **DTG** or **BIC** depending on age and weight) are recommended for initial therapy in children.

Planning for Transitions in Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens

When initiating treatment in infants and children, it is recognized that there may be more potent drug options, options with lower administration burden on a caregiver, and options with lower liquid volume requirements or pill burden as an infant or child gains weight or increases in age and develops the ability to swallow pills. This section briefly addresses planning regimen transitions. Information and recommendations about the sequence and selection of ARV drugs after initial therapy are provided in other Guidelines sections. Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Viral Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy discusses modifications to simplify or optimize treatment or to manage a specific toxicity. Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure discusses situations where viral suppression has not been reached on initial ARV therapy. Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance provides an overview of management with links to toxicity tables (e.g., Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain, Dyslipidemia) that address specific issues.

Selection of Dual–Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone as Part of Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens

Dual-NRTI combinations form the backbone of ART regimens for HIV treatment in both adults and children and are used in combination with an anchor drug from one of the following ARV classes: INSTIs, PIs, or NNRTIs. Dual-NRTI backbones recommended by the Panel as part of *Preferred* or *Alternative* ART regimens for children or for use in special circumstances are listed below, with links

to sections in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information that provide detailed information about the formulations, dosing, safety, and use of each drug in infants and children.

- (Zidovudine [ZDV] or abacavir [ABC]) plus (lamivudine [3TC] or FTC)
- TAF plus FTC for children weighing ≥14 kg. Some FDCs for complete ART regimens that include TAF have varying weight and age requirements.
- Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) plus 3TC or FTC for children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥10 kg

Dual-NRTI selection is influenced by a child's weight and age, as well as the availability of FDCs for NRTI combinations or FDCs for complete ART regimens. The advantages and disadvantages of the different dual-NRTI backbone options that are recommended for initial therapy in children are shown in Table 9 and discussed briefly below.

ZDV has been shown to be safe and effective as part of an ART regimen for infants and children. However, hematologic toxicity (anemia, neutropenia)[9-13] and twice-daily dosing of ZDV—a requirement for all ages—limit the long-term use of ZDV in children.

ABC is approved by the FDA only for use in children aged ≥3 months, but the Panel recommends use of ABC from birth in full-term infants (see Abacavir).[14,15] The Panel supports ABC dosing in neonates based on PK simulation models, and this dosing has been endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). A negative test for the HLA-B*5701 allele must be obtained prior to use of ABC.

3TC and FTC are considered interchangeable as part of ART regimens; both are well tolerated and are associated with few adverse effects (AEs). FTC can be substituted for 3TC as one component of a *Preferred* dual-NRTI backbone (i.e., FTC plus ABC, TDF, or ZDV). Both 3TC and FTC select for the M184V resistance mutation, which is associated with high-level resistance to both drugs, a modest decrease in susceptibility to ABC, and improved susceptibility to ZDV and TDF (see Stanford HIV Drug Resistance Database).

TDF is approved for use in children at least 2 years of age. It is available as a stand-alone drug in both powder or tablet formulations and is also contained in multiple FDC products. TDF administration is associated with decreased bone mineral density (BMD) and disruption of vitamin D metabolism in both adults and children.[16,17] Vitamin D supplementation is recommended for people receiving a TDF-containing regimen who are identified as having vitamin D deficiency (see Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Osteopenia and Osteoporosis). New onset renal impairment and worsening renal impairment have been reported in both adults and children receiving TDF. Although TDF is associated with a decline in glomerular filtration rate, the effect is generally small, and severe glomerular toxicity is rare.[18,19] Irreversible renal failure is very rare, but cases have been reported.[20] With long-term use of TDF, renal toxicity can occur at the site of the proximal convoluted tubules, with clinical manifestations ranging from asymptomatic proteinuria to progressively declining glomerular filtration rates.[18,21,22] The combination of TDF with atazanavir/ritonavir (ATV/r), darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r), or lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) increases plasma tenofovir (TFV) concentrations and the risk of TDF-associated toxicity.[23]

TAF is available only in FDC tablets that must be swallowed whole. With TAF, the active drug TFV

achieves higher intracellular concentrations and lower plasma concentrations than TDF. Bone and renal toxicity associated with TDF is linked to higher plasma concentrations of TFV, which may explain why these toxicities occur less frequently with TAF. Use of COBI- or RTV-boosted PIs in combination with TAF/FTC is not recommended in children weighing <35 kg because these drugs can increase TAF exposure, and no data are available on the use of these combinations. In children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg, boosted PIs can be used with TAF/FTC.

Weight gain and increased risk for clinical obesity have been reported in adults with the use of TAF- and INSTI-containing regimens,[24,25] but these side effects have not been clearly demonstrated in children.[26-28] Furthermore, use of TAF-containing regimens has also been associated with increased levels of total and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and triglycerides. When these concerns arise, regimens containing TDF may be preferable. However, providers must consider the risks of proximal renal tubular injury, rare irreversible renal failure, and decreased BMD that can occur when TDF is used. Since TAF is associated with less bone and renal toxicity than TDF but has equal antiviral efficacy, TAF is preferred over TDF for most pediatric patients.

Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone Selection With Hepatitis B Virus Coinfection

When selecting the NRTI backbone for an initial ART regimen, FTC, 3TC, TDF, and TAF have antiviral activity and efficacy against hepatitis B virus (HBV) and should be considered for use in children with HBV/HIV coinfection. For a comprehensive review, see the Hepatitis B Virus, Hepatitis C Virus, and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (TB) sections of the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines.

Recommended Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens for Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age

Panel recommendations for the anchor drugs for *Preferred* and *Alternative* initial ART regimens in infants aged <30 days (i.e., RAL, NVP, and LPV/r) reflect FDA approval by current weight and the infant's postmenstrual age (calculated as gestational age at birth plus postnatal age) at the time the ARV regimen or specific ARV drug is initiated.

Preferred Regimens

- Term infants (≥37 weeks gestation) or preterm infants with a postmenstrual age ≥37 weeks at the time of treatment initiation:
  - NVP plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC) *or*
  - RAL (for infants weighing ≥2 kg) plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)
- Preterm infants with a postmenstrual age ≥32 weeks to <37 weeks at the time of treatment initiation:
  - NVP plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)
- Preterm infants with a postmenstrual age <32 weeks at the time of treatment initiation:
  - Consultation with a pediatric HIV expert or the National Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8765) is recommended.

Rationale

The Panel recommends RAL or NVP administered with an NRTI backbone of ZDV plus 3TC or FTC as an initial regimen for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in infants. These regimens consist of ARV drugs that are FDA approved, with extensive data on the safety and efficacy of their use in infants and children.[29-35] The selection of anchor drug and regimen will depend on several factors, such as ARV resistance during pregnancy, the infant's gestational age at birth, current postmenstrual age, weight at treatment initiation, the caregiver's perceived ease of preparing and dosing, availability of appropriate formulations, and availability of medications in the outpatient setting. These factors have been summarized below in Table B. Advantages and Disadvantages of ARVs Recommended for Initial Antiretroviral Therapy in Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age. Resistance testing should be performed at the time of HIV diagnosis and before initiation of ART but should not delay treatment initiation. Initial ART regimens can be modified if needed based on drug resistance testing results (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).

At the time of HIV diagnosis, some infants at high risk for HIV acquisition may have initiated presumptive HIV therapy. The regimens recommended for presumptive HIV therapy are addressed in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV and are the same as the ARV regimens recommended for treatment of HIV in neonates. Therefore, once the diagnosis of HIV-1 is established in the neonate, the regimen for presumptive HIV therapy can be continued—now as definitive ART—with virologic monitoring to establish successful viral suppression (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).

At the time of HIV diagnosis, some infants at low risk for HIV acquisition might be receiving ZDV alone as prophylaxis. If the infant has a positive HIV nucleic acid test, a complete ART regimen should be initiated without waiting for the results of a confirmatory test. In this case, ZDV may be continued with the addition of a second NRTI and either RAL or NVP. If neither RAL nor NVP is not an option, an LPV/r-based regimen appropriate for the infant's age and weight can be used (see *Alternative* Regimens below). If confirmatory testing indicates the infant does not have HIV, ART can be discontinued.

Alternative Regimens

Alternative Anchor Drug

- Infants with a postmenstrual age ≥42 weeks *and* a postnatal age of ≥14 days:
  - LPV/r plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)

LPV/r: The Panel recommends LPV/r oral solution in combination with the NRTI backbone recommended in *Preferred* Regimens above as an *Alternative* anchor drug for infants with a postmenstrual age of ≥42 weeks of gestation and a postnatal age of ≥14 days. LPV/r oral solution contains 42.4% (volume/volume) alcohol and 15.3% (weight/volume) propylene glycol. Use of this drug in infants before 42 weeks postmenstrual age and before a postnatal age of 14 days, when hepatic metabolic function and kidney excretory function are maturing, can lead to accumulation of LPV, alcohol, and propylene glycol, resulting in serious cardiac, renal, metabolic, or respiratory problems. For more information about LPV/r use in newborns, refer to the Lopinavir/Ritonavir section in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information.

Alternative Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone

- Term infants (≥37 weeks gestation):
  - ABC plus (3TC or FTC) if HLA-B*5701 negative

ABC: A negative test for the HLA-B*5701 allele must be obtained prior to use of ABC. Although ABC is not FDA approved for use in infants aged <3 months, the Panel recommends ABC as part of an *Alternative* NRTI backbone for full-term infants from birth (see Abacavir). An ABC dosing recommendation using PK simulation models has been endorsed by the WHO using weight-band dosing for full-term neonates. A recent study of infants with HIV in a South African cohort, stratified by age (<28 days and ≥28 days) and weight (<3 kg and ≥3 kg), demonstrated the safety and effectiveness of ABC in infants aged <3 months and in neonates weighing <3 kg.[14,15,36]

Table B. Advantages and Disadvantages of Anchor Drugs Recommended for Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens in Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age

Anchor Drugs[a]	Advantages	Disadvantages
RAL *(Preferred)*	• FDA-approved INSTI for use in term newborns weighing ≥2 kg • Produces rapid reduction in viral load • Safe and well tolerated • Avoids use of NVP and exposure to another class of ARVs (NNRTIs)	• First-generation INSTI with lower barrier to resistance than DTG or BIC • Granule formulation requires a multistep preparation before administration. • Caregivers must be taught how to properly prepare granule formulation. Explain that only a small volume of the prepared granule suspension is used; the rest must be discarded and cannot be reused. • Limited to use in term infants (≥37 weeks of gestation) or preterm infants with a postmenstrual age ≥37 weeks at the time of treatment initiation
NVP *(Preferred)*	• Available in convenient oral solution • Can be used in preterm newborns with a gestational age ≥32 weeks	• Not a *Preferred* ARV outside the neonatal period due to the potential for toxicity and development of viral resistance, although it can be used if clinically indicated • Reduced virologic efficacy in young infants, regardless of exposure to NVP as part of a peripartum preventive regimen • A single mutation can confer resistance to this drug and, in some instances, to all NNRTIs.
LPV/r *(Alternative)*	• Available in convenient oral solution • More durable than RAL or NVP	• Should not be administered to neonates before a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks (calculated as gestational age at birth plus postnatal age) and a postnatal age <14 days • Poor palatability and bitter taste may cause incomplete dosing if infant spits it out. • Not a *Preferred* ARV outside the neonatal period due to issues with palatability and concerns about toxicity, although it can be used if clinically indicated

[a] This table focuses on advantages and disadvantages regarding the selection of anchor drugs for ART regimens used in infants aged <30 days. Additional information is available in Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children.

Key: ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; BIC = bictegravir; DTG = dolutegravir; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; RAL = raltegravir

Practical and Clinical Considerations

The clinician should provide the infant's caregiver with information about prescribed medications, including names, doses, dose times, potential side effects, and how to properly administer the medications. Appropriately sized oral syringes should be dispensed, and liquid medications should include bottle adapter plugs to minimize wastage. Health care providers should counsel caregivers and provide opportunities to practice preparing and administering the prescribed medications, and document such interactions in the medical record; such practice is especially important when RAL is prescribed, due to the multistep process to prepare the infant dose using the oral granules for suspension (see Raltegravir). ARV availability and complexity of preparation and administration may affect decisions about the use of NVP versus RAL. It is recommended that a medication calendar be provided and that the caregiver be involved in deciding the most convenient times for the medications to be administered. Clinicians should ensure that insurance covers the prescribed ART regimen and that the infant's local pharmacy stocks all components of the regimen. For neonates who are initiating ART while still in the hospital, clinicians should provide caregivers with the appropriate information and an initial supply of medications before discharge.

At each clinic visit, the clinician and caregiver should review the process of preparing the different liquid formulations of the medications to ensure that correct volumes and doses are being administered. When appropriate, weight-band dosing should be used and doses should be adjusted based on weight gain and age. This adjustment is particularly important during the first weeks of life, when changes to drug metabolism and renal function occur that impact appropriate dosing recommendations (see Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). Refills should be arranged with pharmacies that stock the ARV drugs.

Special Situations

- **ARV Drug Resistance:** Infants can acquire HIV infection with drug-resistant virus. Transmitted drug resistance has been demonstrated with NNRTIs, NRTIs, PIs, and INSTIs, although transmitted resistance to INSTIs is very rare.[37] Therefore, when viral suppression has not been achieved during pregnancy and drug resistance is suspected, the parent's ARV resistance data should be reviewed, if available, and consultation with a pediatric HIV expert is recommended. In neonates, a *Preferred* ART regimen should be commenced immediately; this regimen may later be changed or modified based on the results of baseline infant HIV genotyping (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).
- **HIV-2 Infection:** ART regimens for infants with HIV-2 infection only or infants with HIV-2 and HIV-1 coinfection should include ARVs that are active against HIV-2. Because NNRTIs are not active against HIV-2, NVP should not be used. A RAL-based regimen is recommended for infants with HIV-2 or with HIV-2 and HIV-1 coinfection: RAL (for full-term infants weighing ≥2 kg) plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC). Consultation with a pediatric HIV expert or the National

Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8765) is recommended for the care of infants weighing <2 kg or with a gestational age <37 weeks.

Planning Antiretroviral Transitions

Although the ARV regimen started in the first 29 days of life can be continued, the Panel recommends that consideration be given to changing the regimen to a DTG-containing regimen after the infant reaches the appropriate age and weight; see *Preferred* Regimens in Recommended Initial ART Regimens for Infants and Children Aged ≥30 Days to <2 Years below. This change should be considered because DTG has greater efficacy and durability than RAL or NVP,[38] DTG dispersible tablets are easier to prepare and administer than RAL granules, and DTG is available in an FDC formulation (DTG/FTC/ABC). A negative test for the HLA-B*5701 allele must be obtained before initiating a regimen of DTG plus ABC plus 3TC (see Recommended Initial ART Regimens for Infants and Children Aged ≥30 Days to <2 Years below).

Recommended Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens for Infants and Children Aged ≥30 Days to <2 Years

Preferred Regimens

- Aged ≥30 days to <2 years and weighing ≥3 kg (therapy should be initiated using one of the regimens described above in Recommended Initial ART Regimens for Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age [e.g., NVP or RAL]. Transition to a DTG-based regimen should be considered when the infant's weight is ≥3 kg)
  - DTG plus ABC plus (3TC or FTC) if HLA-B*5701 negative ***or***
  - DTG plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC) ***or***
- Aged ≥3 months to <2 years and weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg
  - DTG plus ABC plus 3TC as an FDC (Triumeq PD) if HLA-B*5701 negative

[a] For infants aged ≥30 days who weigh <3 kg, therapy should be initiated using one of the regimens described above in Recommended Initial ART Regimens for Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age (e.g., NVP or RAL). Transition to a DTG-based regimen should be considered when the infant's weight is ≥3 kg.

Rationale

It is assumed that all children in this age group are unable to swallow pills and will require treatment with ARVs in liquid, dispersible tablet, powder packet, or chewable tablet formulations.

For infants and children weighing ≥3 kg who are starting ART at ≥30 days of age, the Panel recommends initiating an INSTI-based ART regimen using DTG plus two NRTIs. DTG is a second-generation INSTI that has a higher barrier to resistance than RAL and is FDA approved for use in this age group. While there is low potential for development of resistance with DTG, young infants may initially have very high HIV viral loads and continue to have low-level viremia during the first year of life. The overall risk of developing resistance with DTG-based ART in young infants is unknown.

INSTIs have better efficacy and safety profiles than NNRTIs or PIs, and DTG has been studied extensively in children.[3,5] Importantly, the FDC of DTG/ABC/3TC has proven efficacy and a good safety profile, with weight-band dosing that achieves PK targets.[39]

For infants aged ≥30 days to ≤6 weeks receiving presumptive HIV therapy with RAL or NVP plus two NRTIs at the time of HIV diagnosis, the Panel recommends changing to one of the DTG-based regimens listed above using DTG dispersible tablets. The liquid formulations of the NRTIs used as part of presumptive HIV therapy (usually ZDV plus 3TC) can be continued; no change in NRTIs is required.

Alternative Regimens

Alternative Anchor Drugs

- **LPV/r:** LPV is available as an oral solution coformulated with RTV, and twice-daily dosing is recommended. LPV/r should be administered with food to improve tolerability.[32,40,41] Poor taste and palatability of the oral solution may become an issue for young children and limit acceptance of this regimen. LPV/r has a high genetic barrier to drug resistance. However, poor acceptance of formulation, gastrointestinal side effects, and poor weight gain may limit its use in this age group.[42]
- **ATV/r:** ATV/r can be considered an *Alternative* to LPV/r in children weighing ≥15 kg.[43] ATV and RTV are available as separate powder packets that are mixed with either soft food or formula and administered once daily. The powder formulation of ATV can be used in children weighing ≥15 kg to <25 kg. The powder formulations have poor palatability and may be difficult to tolerate in this age group.
- **NNRTIs:** NVP could be considered if there is resistance or intolerance to both PIs and INSTIs. However, NVP is generally not recommended as an initial treatment in this age group because the low genetic barrier to resistance during a time of significant viremia may lead to drug resistance to all members of the NNRTI class of drugs.[33] Efavirenz (EFV) is not recommended for children <3 years of age due to highly variable PK in young children, difficulty in determining an appropriate dose without therapeutic drug monitoring, and side effects (i.e., neurologic toxicity).[44]

Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbones in *Alternative* Regimens

- Twice-daily dosing: An NRTI backbone of ZDV plus 3TC twice daily or ABC plus 3TC twice daily allows for all medications to be administered at the same time when given in combination with LPV/r or RAL. There is considerable experience with ZDV and 3TC in this age group. ABC is associated with less bone marrow toxicity than ZDV and may be the *Preferred* NRTI for long-term use.

Practical and Clinical Considerations

DTG plus ZDV plus 3TC can be initiated immediately. However, due to the potential of ABC hypersensitivity, a negative test for the HLA-B*5701 allele must be obtained before initiating a regimen of DTG plus ABC plus 3TC. HLA-B*5701 should be included in the initial work-up for all infants and children with HIV. ABC is not FDA approved for use in infants aged <3 months, but the

Panel does recommend use of twice-daily ABC for infants aged ≥30 days. In decisions about selecting ABC as a component of the initial regimen for children aged <2 years, clinicians should consider concerns regarding delays initiating treatment related to HLA-B*5701 testing versus the advantages of using an FDC.

For infants who are aged ≥30 days and ≥3 kg in weight, DTG is available as dispersible tablets that are administered separately, along with the liquid formulations of ZDV and 3TC. For infants and children weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg who are initiating therapy at ≥3 months of age, DTG plus ABC plus 3TC is available as dispersible FDC tablets (Triumeq PD) that can be administered once daily and that provide a number of advantages:

- Tablets are mixed in water (volume depends on the number of tablets needed for weight-band dosing; see Dolutegravir for details about dosing and preparation).
- Once-daily dosing improves adherence to ARVs.
- Use of the FDC formulation avoids the need to measure and administer liquid ZDV and 3TC separately and minimizes difficulties in accurately measuring the volumes needed.
- Use of the FDC minimizes the need to adjust doses frequently as the infant or child grows.

When teaching families about preparing the medications, it should be explained that dispersible tablets need to be mixed in water because of the lack of data about dispersing DTG or DTG/ABC/3TC dispersible tablets in other liquids, such as formula or breast milk. With once-daily dosing, it is particularly important to emphasize the critical importance of adhering to all scheduled doses.

Special Situations

- **DTG dispersible tablets not available:** If DTG dispersible tablets are not available, RAL can be administered using either the oral granules for suspension dispersed in water or the chewable tablets dispersed in juice or formula/milk.[45] RAL oral granules for suspension require a multistep process to prepare each dose, and twice-daily dosing is required. RAL also has a lower genetic barrier to resistance than DTG.
- **Identification of viral resistance:** If viral resistance is identified in baseline genotype testing, the initial ART regimen may need to be modified.
    - **INSTI resistance:** If resistance to INSTIs is present, the regimen should consist of the NRTI backbone plus a boosted PI. Use of LPV/r is recommended in this situation because it is coformulated with ritonavir in a formulation suitable for administration in this age group. In case of multidrug ARV resistance, consultation with a pediatric HIV expert is recommended.
    - **M184V resistance mutation:** If the M184V/I mutation associated with FTC and 3TC is present, these medications should be continued if the new regimen contains TDF, TAF, or ZDV. The presence of this mutation may increase susceptibility to these NRTIs.
- **HLA-B*5701 positive:** If a child tests positive for HLA-B*5107, ART regimens with ABC should not be given because of ABC-associated hypersensitivity.
- **HBV infection:** In HIV/HBV coinfection, an ART regimen should include two NRTIs active against HBV (see Selection of Dual–Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone as

Part of Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens above). However, regimens containing only one active NRTI (3TC or FTC) may be used when children in this age group do not meet the weight criteria for use of a second NRTI active against HBV. Children in this age group should be switched to a TAF/FTC-containing regimen as soon as possible after they weigh ≥14 kg.

- **HIV-2 infection:** ART regimens for infants and children with HIV-2 infection only or those with HIV-2/HIV-1 coinfection should include ARVs that are active against HIV-2. Consultation with a pediatric HIV expert is recommended for the care of infants and children with HIV-2.

Planning Antiretroviral Transitions

For infants aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 kg who initiated treatment on DTG plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC), the Panel recommends changing to a regimen of once-daily DTG plus ABC plus 3TC that is available as dispersible FDC tablets (Triumeq PD) in order to simplify measurement of ARV doses and administration. A negative test for the HLA-B*5701 allele must be obtained prior to initiating an ABC-containing regimen.

Additional options are available for transitioning to other INSTI-containing preparations as children become older and are able to swallow pills, such as the FDC BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy), which can be used in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg (see discussion in Recommended Initial ART Regimens for Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years, below). The NRTI backbone FTC/TAF is available in an FDC (Descovy) that can be used in combination with an anchor drug, such as DTG, in children weighing ≥14 kg who are able to swallow pills.

Recommended Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens for Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years

Preferred Regimens

When planning an initial ART regimen for children aged ≥2 years to <12 years, consider that some children, particularly younger children, may not be able to swallow pills, whereas older children may be able to take pills. It is recommended that clinicians counsel families about teaching children how to swallow pills because that ability increases the number of ARV options and simplifies regimens.[46] Children as young as 4 years of age can be taught how to swallow pills. In addition to age and ability to swallow pills, the weight of the child must also be taken into consideration. Therefore, the Panel recommendations for what regimen to start are presented for children unable to swallow pills and those who are able. FDA-approved pill formulations are based on a child's weight, followed by recommendations for those who are able to swallow pills and the minimum weight allowed for dosing. Please refer to Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for specific dosing of ARV drugs by weight band.

***Preferred* Regimens for Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years Who Are Not Able to Swallow Pills**

- DTG plus ABC plus 3TC in the dispersible FDC formulation (Triumeq PD) for children weighing 6 kg to <25 kg if HLA-B*5701 negative ***or***
    - DTG film-coated tablets (Tivicay) plus ABC plus (3TC or FTC) in liquid formulations for children weighing ≥25 kg if HLA-B*5701 negative (see Dolutegravir for special instructions about administering DTG tablets to children who are not able to swallow pills)

- DTG plus FTC plus TAF for children weighing ≥14 kg (see Dolutegravir and Tenofovir Alafenamide for available formulations of DTG [Tivicay, Tivicay PD], dosage strengths of FTC/TAF [Descovy], and special instructions for administering DTG film-coated tablets and FTC/TAF tablets to children who are not able to swallow pills) ***or***
- DTG in dispersible tablets plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC) in liquid formulations

The dispersible FDC tablet of DTG/ABC/3TC (Triumeq PD) is a once-daily regimen. A child must have a negative HLA-B*5701 allele screening test before initiating treatment to ensure that the child will not be at risk for a hypersensitivity reaction to ABC.

When the DTG/ABC/3TC dispersible FDC tablet cannot be used (i.e., it is not available or results of HLA-B*5701 testing are unknown or positive) and the child weighs <14 kg at treatment initiation, the Panel recommends initiating a regimen of DTG plus ZDV plus 3TC. DTG is available as dispersible tablets (Tivicay PD) dosed once daily, which can be used in children weighing 6 kg to <25 kg. ZDV and 3TC are both available in liquid formulations and require twice-daily dosing. If DTG/ABC/3TC cannot be used and the child weighs ≥14 kg, DTG plus FTC/TAF (Descovy) is recommended by the Panel. FTC/TAF (Descovy) is available in two different-strength tablets, with the lower-strength tablet for children weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg.

Preferred Regimens for Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years Who Are Able to Swallow Pills

For children weighing <14 kg, see regimens listed above for children who are not able to swallow pills.

- BIC plus FTC plus TAF (FDC BIC/FTC/TAF, Biktarvy) for children weighing ≥14 kg
- DTG plus FTC plus TAF (DTG, Tivicay, plus the FDC FTC/TAF, Descovy) for children weighing ≥14 kg
- DTG plus ABC plus 3TC (FDC DTG/ABC/3TC, Triumeq) for children weighing ≥25 kg if HLA-B*5701 negative

Rationale

The Panel recommends initiating ART with a once-daily, single-tablet regimen of BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) for children weighing ≥14 kg. Two different strengths of BIC/FTC/TAF tablets are available, with the lower-strength tablet for children weighing ≥14 kg and <25 kg. The product label states that for children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, the BIC/FTC/TAF tablet can be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are ingested within approximately 10 minutes.[47]

DTG/3TC/ABC (Triumeq) is another *Preferred* single-tablet regimen option for children weighing ≥25 kg; however, the DTG/3TC/ABC pill is much larger than the BIC/FTC/TAF pill and might be more challenging to swallow, particularly for younger children. If DTG/3TC/ABC is selected, documentation of a negative HLA-B*5701 screening should occur prior to treatment initiation. For children weighing ≥14 kg, the film-coated tablet of DTG (Tivicay) used in conjunction with the FDC tablets of FTC/TAF (Descovy) is also recommended by the Panel.

The FDC of BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) has been studied in adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years and weighing ≥35 kg (Cohort 1), children aged 6 years to <12 years and weighing ≥25 kg (Cohort 2), and children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg (Cohort 3). All participants had maintained viral loads <50 copies/mL for ≥6 months. Cohorts 1 and 2 received the adult formulation of BIC/FTC/TAF. Children in Cohort 3 received BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg. Overall, the drug was well tolerated in all participants in all cohorts. Drug exposure in all cohorts was similar to the exposure observed in adults. At 24 weeks, all 50 adolescents (Cohort 1) and 50 children (Cohort 2) maintained viral suppression, and at Week 48, 49 of 50 participants in each cohort maintained suppression.[48] Among children in Cohort 3, after 24 weeks, all 12 participants maintained viral suppression.

DTG, studied in the multinational open-label IMPAACT 1093 study[3,49,50] and ODYSSEY,[4,13,51] has been demonstrated to be safe, efficacious, and well tolerated in children. The dispersible tablet formulation of the FDC ABC 60 mg/DTG 5 mg/3TC 30 mg (Triumeq PD) was studied in IMPAACT P2019 to confirm dosing of the three-drug FDC in children aged <12 years. In IMPAACT P2019, children were dosed in five weight bands aligned with WHO-preferred weight bands. Results of the initial PK and safety assessments for 35 participants in weight bands ≥6 kg demonstrated acceptable PK parameters and tolerability for all cohorts and confirmed dosing according to WHO weight bands.[39]

Alternative Regimens

Anchor Drugs

When concern for INSTI resistance exists, the following anchor drugs represent *Alternative* treatment options when paired with two fully active NRTIs.

- **ATV plus RTV or COBI:** ATV is available as a powder packet that should be mixed with solid food and administered once daily. ATV powder should be coadministered with RTV once daily for a child aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥15 kg to ≤25 kg. RTV is also available in powder packets; the powder formulation has poor palatability and may be difficult to tolerate. For a child weighing ≥15 kg who is able to swallow pills, the capsule formulation of ATV can be dosed once daily with the RTV tablets (i.e., ATV/r). Boosting ATV with COBI is an option only if the child weighs ≥35 kg and is able to swallow pills. The FDC of COBI-boosted ATV (ATV/c) can be administered once daily.
- **DRV plus RTV or COBI:** DRV is an option for children aged ≥3 years to <12 years and weighing ≥20 kg. However, DRV requires a PK enhancer or boosting agent, such as RTV or COBI. DRV is available as a solution or tablet that can be administered twice daily with an RTV powder packet or tablet. Boosting DRV with COBI is an option only if the child weighs ≥40 kg. COBI-boosted DRV (DRV/c) is available in a once-daily FDC (Prezcobix).
- **NNRTIs:** An NNRTI-based regimen using NVP, EFV, or doravirine (DOR) could be considered in the case of resistance or intolerance to both PIs and INSTIs. EFV is not recommended by the Panel for use in children aged <3 years due to highly variable PK in young children, difficulty in determining an appropriate dose without therapeutic drug monitoring, and side effects (i.e., neurologic toxicity) (see Efavirenz). DOR is approved for use in children weighing ≥35 kg, and recent data found that once-daily dosing of DOR/3TC/TDF was safe and well tolerated for maintaining viral suppression through 96 weeks in adolescents.[52]

Practical and Clinical Considerations

The availability of FDC formulations and method of administration are important considerations in the selection of a *Preferred* initial regimen.

- BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) is a single-tablet regimen for children weighing ≥14 kg. The tablet may not be crushed or dissolved; however, it can be split in half prior to dosing for ease of swallowing. BIC/FTC/TAF is available in two formulations for children able to swallow pills, including BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg for children weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg for children weighing ≥25 kg.
- ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq PD) is a dispersible tablet that can be used in children weighing <25 kg and should be dissolved in water. Each tablet contains all three drugs. The number of tablets per dose is based on a child's weight.
- ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq) is a nondispersible, single-tablet regimen option for children weighing ≥25 kg who are able to swallow whole pills. However, a disadvantage is the larger pill size, which can make swallowing challenging compared with the other recommended options.
- DTG plus FTC/TAF is dosed once daily. DTG is available as dispersible tablets (Tivicay PD) and as a film-coated tablet (Tivicay). FTC/TAF (Descovy) is available in two different strengths as a single tablet to be swallowed. See Dolutegravir and Tenofovir Alafenamide for specific weight parameters and for special instructions about administering these ARVs to children who are not able to swallow pills.

Special Situations

- Identification of viral resistance: If viral resistance is identified in baseline genotypic testing, the initial ART regimen may need to be modified.
    - **INSTI resistance:** If resistance to INSTIs is present, the regimen should consist of the NRTI backbone plus a boosted PI. PI options include ATV or DRV, both of which should be boosted with either RTV or COBI. See *Alternative* Regimens Anchor Drugs above for age and weight restrictions for each PI in conjunction with its formulation and its boosting agent. In the case of multidrug ARV resistance, consultation with a pediatric HIV expert is recommended.
    - **M184V resistance mutation:** Regimens should contain at least two, but preferably three, fully active drugs for durable and potent virologic suppression. If the M184V/I mutation associated with FTC and 3TC is present, these medications should be continued if the regimen contains TDF, TAF, or ZDV. The presence of this mutation may increase susceptibility to these NRTIs.
- **HLA-B*5701 positive:** If a child tests positive for HLA-B*5107, ARV regimens with ABC should be avoided because of ABC-associated hypersensitivity.
- **HBV infection:** The ART regimen should include two NRTIs active against HBV (see Selection of Dual–Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone as Part of Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens above). The Panel recommends the FDC FTC/TAF (Descovy) as the NRTI backbone for children with HIV/HBV coinfection.

- **HIV-2 infection:** ART regimens for children with HIV-2 infection only or those with HIV-2/HIV-1 coinfection should include ARVs that are active against HIV-2. Consultation with a pediatric HIV expert is recommended for the care of infants and children with HIV-2.

Planning Antiretroviral Transitions

For children aged ≥2 years to <12 years who initiated treatment when they were unable to swallow pills or whose weight precluded use of a pill option, when they can swallow pills and are of an appropriate age and weight, the Panel recommends transitioning to the once-daily FDC of BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy), so long as there are no contraindications.

Recommended Regimens for Children and Adolescents Aged ≥12 Years

Recommendations for initial ART regimens for adolescents are addressed in What to Start in the Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents With HIV (also see Adolescents and Young Adults With HIV); an overview is provided here.

Pubertal changes during adolescence encompass increased growth velocity, changes in body composition, and development of secondary sexual characteristics. It is recognized that these changes can affect the PK and pharmacodynamics of drugs. Adolescents with perinatal HIV infection are more likely to have delayed puberty and growth compared with their uninfected peers.[53] However, regimens recommended for initial ART in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines provide adequate drug exposure and are effective and safe when used for people with HIV in this age bracket above a minimum weight, regardless of pubertal stage.

Preferred Regimens

Preferred regimens for adolescents aged ≥12 years starting treatment should have the following characteristics: (a) preferably be available as a once-daily FDC single-tablet regimen for ease of use, (b) have a high barrier to resistance, (c) be well tolerated, and (d) have demonstrated clinical efficacy and safety with long-term use. For adolescents who do not have a prior history of using long-acting cabotegravir (CAB-LA) for HIV preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP), *Preferred* ART regimens are listed below.

- BIC plus FTC plus TAF (FDC BIC/FTC/TAF, Biktarvy) for adolescents weighing ≥25 kg
- DTG plus FTC plus TAF (FDC FTC/TAF, Descovy) for adolescents weighing ≥35 kg

DRV-based regimens are recommended for initial therapy in adolescents who previously received CAB-LA for PrEP (see *Alternative* Regimens below).

In the unlikely event that an adolescent aged ≥12 years is not able to swallow pills or weighs <25 kg, please refer to the *Preferred* regimens for children ≥2 years to <12 years, above, and Table 8, below.

Rationale

The *Preferred* regimens (BIC/FTC/TAF and DTG/FTC/TAF) are consistent with the Panel's recommendations for children ≥2 years to <12 years and contain the appropriate dose of the three drugs for the specified weight. These regimens are also the same as those recommended for use in adults and adolescents without delay in pubertal onset, allowing for the continuation of the same

initial *Preferred* regimen as people transition through puberty from adolescence to adulthood. Whereas BIC/FTC/TAF is an FDC, DTG/FTC/TAF is a two-drug regimen of DTG along with the FDC of FTC/TAF.

The Adult and Adolescent Guidelines also recommend the two-drug regimen DTG/3TC as an option for initial ART in some individuals (see What to Start). However, the Panel does not recommend a DTG/3TC regimen for initial therapy in adolescents because of a lack of data and concerns about the efficacy and durability of two-drug ART regimens related to gaps or lapses in ARV adherence common in adolescents.

Alternative Regimens

- DTG plus ABC plus 3TC (FDC DTG/ABC/3TC, Triumeq) for adolescents weighing ≥25 kg
- DRV/c plus TAF plus FTC (FDC DRV/c/TAF/FTC, Symtuza) for adolescents weighing ≥40 kg
- DRV/c (FDC, Prezcobix) plus TDF/FTC (FDC, Truvada) for adolescents weighing ≥40 kg

Although the first option (DTG/ABC/3TC) is available as a convenient FDC regimen, HLA-B*5701 testing must be performed before initiating therapy. Due to the risk of ABC-related cardiovascular events and the availability of alternative options for initial therapy in this age group, this regimen is no longer recommended as *Preferred*. Boosted DRV regimens are approved for use in adolescents and can be used if concerns exist about INSTI resistance (e.g., adolescents diagnosed with HIV who have a history of CAB-LA use for PrEP). Boosted DRV regimens give the provider a choice between using a TAF-containing regimen as a single daily FDC tablet or a TDF-containing regimen consisting of two daily tablets. Choices for the boosted DRV regimens should be driven by concern for renal and bone disease (i.e., the need to avoid TDF) or adverse weight or lipid issues (i.e., the need to avoid TAF).

Practical and Clinical Considerations

Clinicians should provide the education and support that caregivers and adolescents need to be able to administer or take ARVs correctly and adhere to the ART regimen (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV). Adolescents may have difficulty adhering to daily oral medications. Among many other factors, the number of pills and the pill size are important considerations. Additionally, when considering the optimal regimen for initiation, the clinician should understand whether the adolescent will be supervised to take treatment or will be expected to take their treatment independently. *Preferred* initial therapy with a single tablet dosed once daily helps maintain adherence and viral suppression. Biktarvy is one of the smallest FDC single-tablet regimens currently available (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents).

Several other issues unique to adolescents need to be addressed when initiating HIV treatment. Some may be living with caregivers who are not aware of their diagnosis and may still be accessing care under their parent or caregiver's health insurance plan. Communications between health insurance companies and caregivers can compromise confidentiality and result in accidental disclosure. Clinicians and social workers need to work around this issue, and in some instances, assist the individual in establishing their own access to HIV drugs and/or health insurance. Some adolescents may be emancipated and living on their own but need access to affordable health insurance. In other

instances, adolescents with HIV have been rejected by their families and are homeless. Rapid initiation of HIV treatment, although desirable, may have to be deferred until social barriers to adherence are addressed. Adolescents may have other comorbidities, such as depression and increased risk for suicide. These are heightened in adolescents whose sexual/romantic attractions and/or self-expression are less common. Food insecurity and other social determinants of health that can affect an adolescent's ability to safely initiate and adhere to HIV treatment should be evaluated and available support offered, if possible. Finally, use of patient-centered language can be beneficial in establishing and maintaining rapport with adolescents, facilitating sustained engagement in care. For additional information, see Special Considerations for Antiretroviral Therapy Use in Adolescents With HIV and Adolescents and Young Adults With HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines.

Special Situations

If weight gain and increased risk for clinical obesity is a concern, or if the adolescent has a high-risk lipid profile, a TAF-containing regimen may not be an appropriate component of a preferred initial regimen (see Selection of Dual–Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Backbone as Part of Initial Antiretroviral Therapy Regimens, above). An FDC single-tablet regimen containing the NNRTI DOR with a backbone of TDF/FTC can be considered when initiating treatment in adolescents with these concerns.[52] However, providers must take into account the risks of proximal tubular injury, rare irreversible renal failure, and decreased BMD that can occur when TDF is used.

Planning Antiretroviral Transitions

Adherence to daily oral medications is particularly challenging for adolescents,[54,55] resulting in low rates of virologic suppression compared to adults.[56] CAB and RPV (Cabenuva) is a two-drug long-acting (LA) ART regimen administered as two intramuscular injections given every two months that is approved for adolescents weighing ≥35 kg and adults with HIV who are virologically suppressed on an oral regimen. Although LA CAB/RPV is not an option for initial therapy, it provides an option for adolescents who wish to maintain viral suppression without the need for daily oral medications. In select circumstances, some adolescents experiencing difficulties with adherence to an oral ART regimen could receive intensive adherence support to achieve viral suppression on their initial regimen as a bridge to switching to LA CAB/RPV (see Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy: Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy).[57]

Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy for HIV Infection in Infants and Children: Birth to <12 Years of Age

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) designates regimens as *Preferred* based on efficacy, ease of administration, acceptable toxicity, and other considerations. *Alternative* regimens also have demonstrated efficacy, but clinical experience with these regimens is limited, or these regimens are more difficult to administer than *Preferred* regimens. Regimens should be tailored to the individual by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each combination (see Table A. Factors to Consider When Selecting an Antiretroviral Treatment Regimen for Infants, Children and Adolescents, above, and Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children, below).

Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy for HIV Infection in Infants and Children: Birth to <12 Years of Age

Many agents have multiple formulations, as well as age and weight recommendations. Refer to Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for additional information and recommended doses and formulations. In addition, many drugs that are recommended for use in newborns do not have dosing recommendations for premature infants. Additional information regarding dosing recommendations in this population can be found in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.

Children who are receiving effective and tolerable antiretroviral regimens can continue using those regimens as they age, even if the combinations they are receiving are no longer *Preferred* regimens. Refer to the Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy sections for additional guidance about transitioning children to other regimens as they grow.

Panel recommendations for children and adolescents aged ≥12 years are not included in this table; see Recommended Regimens for Children and Adolescents Aged ≥12 Years in the text.

See the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines for recommendations about initial antiretroviral therapy for adolescents.

Preferred Initial Regimens and ARV Drugs Based on Age and Weight at Time of Treatment Initiation 8A. Infants From Birth to <30 Days of Age			
Panel Recommendation[a,b]	Regimen or ARV Drug	Age and/or Weight Restriction[c]	Formulations and Comments[c]
Preferred ART regimens for infants ≥37 weeks of gestation and aged <30 days and preterm infants with a postmenstrual age of ≥37 weeks at treatment initiation	NNRTI (NVP) or INSTI (RAL) plus two NRTIs • NVP plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC) *or* • RAL plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)	None ≥2 kg (RAL)	All oral solutions RAL granules for oral suspension plus oral solutions for ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)
Preferred ART regimen for preterm infants ≥32 to <37 weeks of gestation	NNRTI (NVP) plus two NRTIs • NVP plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)	None	All oral solutions
Preferred ART regimens for preterm infants <32 weeks of gestation	Consultation with a pediatric HIV expert or the National Perinatal HIV/AIDS Hotline (1-888-448-8765) is recommended		
Alternative ART regimens for infants	PI (LPV/r) plus two NRTIs • LPV/r plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)	Postmenstrual age ≥42 weeks and a postnatal age of >14 days (LPV/r)	All oral solutions
Alternative NRTI backbone for infants	• ABC plus (3TC or FTC) if HLA-B*5701 negative	≥37 weeks of gestation	All oral solutions Use of ABC[d] requires negative HLA-B*5701 results.

Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy for HIV Infection in Infants and Children: Birth to <12 Years of Age

Preferred Initial Regimens and ARV Drugs Based on Age and Weight at Time of Treatment Initiation 8B. Infants and Children Aged ≥30 Days to <2 Years			
Panel Recommendation[a,b]	Regimen or ARV Drug	Age and/or Weight Restriction[c]	Formulations and Comments[c]
Preferred ART regimens for infants and children aged ≥30 days to <2 years	INSTI (DTG)[e,f] plus two NRTIs • DTG plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC) *or*	DTG ≥30 days and ≥3 kg to <25 kg	DTG dispersible tablets plus oral solutions (ABC[d], ZDV, 3TC, or FTC)
	• DTG plus ABC plus (3TC or FTC) if HLA-B*5701 negative	DTG ≥30 days and ≥3 kg to <25 kg	
	• DTG/ABC/3TC in FDC if HLA-B*5701 negative	≥3 months and ≥6 kg to <25 kg (Triumeq PD)	DTG/ABC/3TC in FDC dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD)
		≥25 kg (Triumeq)	DTG/ABC/3TC FDC tablets if ≥25 kg (Triumeq). See Dolutegravir for special instructions if a child is unable to swallow pills.
Alternative anchor drugs to replace DTG in an ART regimen with a *Preferred* NRTI backbone for infants and children aged ≥30 days to <2 years	Boosted PI • LPV/r[f] (boosted PI)	Postmenstrual age ≥42 weeks and postnatal age >14 days	LPV/r is available in an oral solution.
	• ATV plus RTV (boosted PI)	ATV ≥15 kg to <25 kg	ATV is available in powder packets; RTV is available in 100-mg tablets and 100-mg powder packets.
	NNRTI NVP (NNRTI)	<3 years	NVP is available in an oral solution.

Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy for HIV Infection in Infants and Children: Birth to <12 Years of Age

Preferred Initial Regimens and ARV Drugs Based on Age and Weight at Time of Treatment Initiation 8C. Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years			
Panel Recommendation[a,b]	Regimen or ARV Drug	Age and/or Weight Restriction[c]	Formulations and Comments[c]
Preferred ART regimens for children aged ≥2 years to <12 years who are unable to swallow pills	INSTI (DTG) plus Two NRTIs		For children who are unable to swallow pills
	• DTG/ABC/3TC in FDC if HLA-B*5701 negative	≥3 months and 3 kg to <25 kg (Triumeq PD)	DTG/ABC/3TC is available in FDC dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD).
	• DTG plus ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)	≥30 days and ≥3 kg (DTG)	DTG is available in dispersible tablets and taken with oral solutions (ZDV, 3TC, or FTC).
	• DTG plus FTC/TAF; FTC/TAF in FDC (Descovy)	≥30 days and ≥3 kg (DTG) ≥14 kg to <25 kg (FTC/TAF)	TAF is available as FTC/TAF in FDC (Descovy) only, not as an individual drug. See Tenofovir Alafenamide for special instructions about administering FTC/TAF to children who are not able to swallow pills. For children who are ≥25 kg and unable to swallow pills, see Dolutegravir and Tenofovir Alafenamide for special instructions about administering DTG 50 mg and FTC/TAF (FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg).
Preferred ART regimens for children aged ≥2 years to <12 years who are able to swallow pills	INSTI (BIC or DTG) plus Two NRTIs		For children who are able to swallow pills
	• BIC plus FTC plus TAF in FDC[g,h]	Aged ≥2 years and ≥14 kg to <25 kg (BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg) ≥25 kg (BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg)	BIC is available only in the FDC BIC/FTC/TAF. The product label states that for children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, the BIC/FTC/TAF tablet can be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are ingested within approximately 10 minutes; see Bictegravir.

Table 8. Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy for HIV Infection in Infants and Children: Birth to <12 Years of Age

Preferred Initial Regimens and ARV Drugs Based on Age and Weight at Time of Treatment Initiation 8C. Children Aged ≥2 Years to <12 Years			
Panel Recommendation[a,b]	Regimen or ARV Drug	Age and/or Weight Restriction[c]	Formulations and Comments[c]
	• DTG plus ABC plus 3TC in FDC if HLA-B*5701 negative	≥25 kg	DTG/ABC/3TC is available in FDC tablets (Triumeq).
	• DTG plus FTC/TAF; FTC/TAF in FDC (Descovy)[i]	≥14 kg (DTG tablets [Tivicay] and FTC/TAF tablets)	TAF is available only as FTC/TAF in FDC (Descovy); not available as an individual drug. See Tenofovir Alafenamide.
Alternative anchor drugs in an ART regimen with a *Preferred* NRTI backbone for children aged ≥2 years to <12 years[i]	• ATV powder plus RTV powder (boosted PI)	≥15 kg to ≤ 25 kg	ATV is available in 50-mg powder packets; RTV is available in 100-mg powder packets.
	• ATV capsules plus RTV tablets (boosted PI)	≥15 kg	ATV and RTV powder can be mixed with soft food or liquid.
	• ATV plus COBI in FDC tablet (ATV/c, boosted PI)	≥35 kg	
	• DRV plus RTV (boosted PI)	≥20 kg	DRV is available in an oral solution or tablets to be taken with RTV powder or tablets.
	• DRV plus COBI in FDC tablet (DRV/c, boosted PI)	≥40 kg	
	• NVP	None	NVP is available in an oral solution or immediate-release tablets.
	• NVP XR	Aged ≥6 years	
	• EFV	Aged ≥3 years and ≥10 kg	EFV capsules can be opened and used as a sprinkle formulation for children who are unable to swallow pills.
	• DOR	≥35 kg	DOR is available as a single-tablet regimen (DOR/3TC/TDF).

[a] Panel recommendations summarized in this table are for children with HIV-1 infection.

[b] Recommendations for ARV drugs or ART regimens to be used in special circumstances are addressed in the text (e.g., ARV resistance, HBV coinfection).

[c] Additional information about FDCs is available in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information, Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class, and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

[d] ABC is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in full-term neonates and infants aged <3 months. Recent data from the IMPAACT P1106 trial and two observational cohorts provide reassuring data on the safety of ABC in infants when initiated at the age of <3 months (see Abacavir). Before ABC administration, a negative HLA-B*5701 allele

test result should be available. An FDC tablet that contains ABC/3TC (Epzicom and generic) is available for use in children weighing ≥25 kg.

[e] If DTG dispersible tablets are not available, RAL can be administered using either the oral granules for suspension dispersed in water or the chewable tablets dispersed in juice, formula, or milk.

[f] An NRTI backbone of ZDV plus 3TC twice daily or ABC plus 3TC twice daily allows for all medications to be administered at the same time when given in combination with LPV/r or RAL. There is considerable experience with ZDV and 3TC in this age group. ABC is associated with less bone marrow toxicity than ZDV and may be the preferred NRTI for long-term use.

[g] BIC/FTC/TAF tablets are available in two different strengths, with the lower-strength tablet for children weighing ≥14 kg and <25 kg.

[h] The product label for BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) states that for children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, the BIC/FTC/TAF tablet can be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are ingested within approximately 10 minutes.

[i] FTC plus TAF is recommended as a *Preferred* NRTI combination for children and adolescents weighing ≥14 kg when used with an INSTI or NNRTI; an FDC tablet that contains FTC/TAF (Descovy) is available in two strengths, with dosage determined by a child's weight (see Tenofovir Alafenamide). FTC/TAF is approved by the FDA for children weighing ≥14 kg when used in the regimen BIC/FTC/TAF, which is also available in two strengths, with dosage determined by a child's weight. FTC/TAF is a *Preferred* NRTI combination for children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg when used with a boosted PI; FTC/TAF is not approved or recommended for use with a boosted PI in children weighing <35 kg.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ARV = antiretroviral; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; COBI = cobicistat; DOR = doravirine; DRV = darunavir; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; FDC = fixed-dose combination; FTC = emtricitabine; HLA = human leukocyte antigen; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; HBV = hepatitis B virus; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; PI = protease inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; RTV = ritonavir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ZDV = zidovudine

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

See Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information and Table 7. Antiretroviral Regimen Considerations for Initial Therapy Based on Specific Clinical Scenarios in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines for more information. For detailed information about drug interactions, see Drug–Drug Interactions and ARV class-specific tables 24a to 24g and 25a to 25b in Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines, as well as the HIV Drug Interaction Checker and updated prescribing information.

Note: Drugs within each ARV class are listed in alphabetical order.

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
All INSTIs	INSTI Class Advantages • Well tolerated	INSTI Class Disadvantages • Possible weight gain in adults, especially Black/African American women • The potential exists for multiple drug interactions due to metabolism via hepatic enzymes (e.g., CYP3A4, UGT1A1). Information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker. • Oral absorption can be reduced by simultaneous administration with drugs or supplements containing polyvalent cations.
BIC	• Once-daily administration • No food requirement • Coformulated with TAF/FTC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • Higher barrier to resistance than RAL	• The FDC tablet is not recommended for patients with hepatic impairment or an estimated CrCl <30 mL/min. • CNS side effects, particularly sleep disturbances. Depression and suicidal ideation (rare; usually in people with preexisting psychiatric conditions) • CYP3A4 and UGT1A1 substrate (but not a CYP3A4 inducer or inhibitor); potential for drug–drug interactions • Inhibits tubular secretion of creatinine, resulting in an increase in serum creatinine without affecting glomerular function. This increase is generally benign but can be misinterpreted by clinicians not aware of this side effect. Added follow-up may be required in patients with underlying renal disease.

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
DTG	• Once-daily administration • No food requirement • Coformulated with ABC/FTC and with 3TC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • Single-agent DTG pills are available in several doses and are small in size. • DTG and the FDC ABC/DTG/3TC are available as dispersible tablets for suspension. • Higher barrier to resistance than RAL	• UGT1A1 substrate; potential for drug–drug interactions. • CNS side effects, particularly sleep disturbances. Depression and suicidal ideation (rare; usually in people with preexisting psychiatric conditions) • Inhibits tubular secretion of creatinine, resulting in an increase of serum creatinine without affecting glomerular function. This increase is generally benign but can be misinterpreted by clinicians not aware of this side effect. Added follow-up may be required in people with underlying renal disease.
RAL	• No food requirement • Available in tablet, chewable tablet, and oral granules for suspension formulations • Chewable tablets can be crushed and mixed with various liquids for infants aged ≥4 weeks who weigh ≥3 kg. • Favorable lipid profile	• Lower barrier to resistance than boosted PI-, BIC-, or DTG-based regimens • Oral absorption of RAL can be reduced by simultaneous administration with drugs or supplements containing polyvalent cations. • UGT1A1 substrate; potential for drug interaction • Depression and suicidal ideation (rare; usually in patients with preexisting psychiatric conditions) • Increases in creatine kinase, myopathy, and rhabdomyolysis have been reported. • Potential for rare systemic allergic reaction or hepatitis • Granule formulation requires a multistep preparation before administration; caregiver must be taught how to properly prepare this formulation. • Higher pill burden than other INSTI-based regimens. No FDC formulation.

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
All NNRTIs	NNRTI Class Advantages • Longer half-life allows for once-daily dosing of DOR, EFV, and RPV • Lower risk of dyslipidemia and fat maldistribution than PIs • PI-sparing • Lower pill burden than PIs for children taking the solid formulation; easier to use and adhere to than PI-based regimens	NNRTI Class Disadvantages • Prevalence of NNRTI-resistant viral strains in patients who have never used ART drugs and the drugs' low barrier for the development of resistance. A single mutation can confer resistance, with cross-resistance between EFV and NVP. • Rare but serious and potentially life-threatening cases of skin rash (including SJS) and hepatic toxicity are possible. All NNRTIs pose this risk, but the risk is greatest with NVP; these toxic effects have not been reported in neonates. • Potential for multiple drug interactions due to metabolism via hepatic enzymes (e.g., CYP3A4). Information about drug interactions is available in the Drug–Drug Interactions section of the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.
DOR	• Once-daily administration • Available as a single-drug tablet and coformulated with TDF/FTC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • No food requirement • Has continued antiviral activity in the setting of some NNRTI mutations • Favorable lipid profile • Not associated with weight gain compared with boosted DRV or EFV	• Neuropsychiatric AEs, but fewer than reported for EFV • DOR is contraindicated when coadministered with drugs that are strong cytochrome P450 (CYP)3A enzyme inducers (see Doravirine). • Potential for CYP3A4 drug interactions • Treatment-emergent DOR resistance mutations may confer resistance to certain NNRTIs.
EFV	• Once-daily administration • Available as a single-drug tablet and coformulated with TDF/FTC and TDF/3TC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • Can give with food (but avoid high-fat meals); usually recommended to be taken on an empty stomach • Capsules can be opened and added to food.	• CNS side effects, including dizziness, abnormal dreams, headache, depression, suicidality, insomnia, and somnolence. Bedtime dosing is recommended to reduce CNS effects. • Rash (generally mild); QTc prolongation, dyslipidemia • Potential for CYP3A4 drug interactions • No commercially available liquid formulation • Limited data on dosing for children aged <3 years • No data on dosing for children aged <3 months

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
NVP	• Liquid formulation is available. • Dosing information for young infants is available. • No food requirement • Extended-release formulation that allows once-daily dosing in older children is available.	• Reduced virologic efficacy in young infants, regardless of exposure to NVP as part of a peripartum preventive regimen • Higher incidence of rash/HSR than other NNRTIs • Higher rates of serious hepatic toxicity than EFV • Decreased virologic response compared with EFV • Twice-daily dosing necessary in children with body surface area <0.58 m^2 • Low barrier to resistance
RPV	• Once-daily dosing • Available as a single-drug tablet and coformulated with TDF/FTC and TAF/FTC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class)	• Should not use in children with viral loads >100,000 copies/mL • Food requirement. Must be taken with a ≥500 kcal meal at a consistent time each day; this may affect adherence. • Potential for CYP3A4 drug interactions • RPV oral absorption is reduced with increased gastric pH. Use of RPV with PPIs is contraindicated; see Adult Drug–Drug Interactions for dosing recommendations when RPV is coadministered with H2 blocker or antacids. • Low barrier to resistance • Side effects include depression, headache, skin rash, and QTc prolongation.
All PIs	PI Class Advantages • NNRTI-sparing • Clinical, virologic, and immunologic efficacy are well documented. • Higher barrier to resistance than NNRTIs and RAL. Resistance to PIs requires multiple mutations. • When combined with a dual-NRTI backbone, a regimen that contains a PI targets HIV at two steps of viral replication by inhibiting the activity of viral reverse transcriptase and protease enzymes	PI Class Disadvantages • Metabolic complications, including dyslipidemia, fat maldistribution, and insulin resistance • Potential for multiple drug interactions because of metabolism via hepatic enzymes (e.g., CYP3A4); information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker. • Higher pill burden than NRTI-based or NNRTI-based regimens for people taking solid formulations • Poor palatability of liquid preparations, which may affect adherence • Most PIs require RTV or COBI boosting, resulting in drug–drug interactions that are associated with RTV or COBI.

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
ATV/r and ATV/c Unboosted ATV	• Once-daily dosing • Powder formulation is available for young children. • ATV has less effect on TG and total cholesterol levels than other PIs (but RTV boosting may be associated with elevations in these parameters).	• No liquid formulation • Food requirement • Indirect hyperbilirubinemia is common but asymptomatic. Scleral icterus may be distressing to the patient, which may affect adherence. Other side effects include cholelithiasis, nephrolithiasis, and PR interval prolongation. • Must be used with caution in patients with preexisting conduction system defects (can prolong the PR interval of an ECG) • ATV boosted with RTV or COBI is recommended. Both RTV and COBI are associated with a large number of drug–drug interactions. CYP3A4 substrate and inhibitor • ATV absorption is reduced when ATV is given with acid-lowering therapies. • COBI inhibits active tubular secretion of creatinine and can increase serum creatinine without affecting renal glomerular function. This increase is generally benign but can be misinterpreted by clinicians not aware of this side effect. Added follow-up may be required in individuals with underlying renal disease.
DRV/c or DRV/r	• Can be used once daily in children aged ≥12 years • Liquid formulation is available. • DRV requires a boosting agent. • Available as a single-drug tablet and coformulated as DRV/c and DRV/c/TAF/FTC (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class)	• Pediatric pill burden high with current tablet dose formulations • Food requirement • Must be boosted with RTV or COBI to achieve adequate plasma concentrations • Contains sulfa moiety; the potential for cross-sensitivity between DRV and other drugs in sulfonamide class is unknown. Other side effects include hyperlipidemia and increased transaminases. • RTV and COBI are associated with a large number of potential drug–drug interactions. • COBI inhibits active tubular secretion of creatinine and can increase serum creatinine without affecting renal glomerular function. This increase is generally benign but can be misinterpreted by clinicians not aware of this side effect. Added follow-up may be required in patients with underlying renal disease. • Can be used only once daily in the absence of certain PI-associated resistance mutations

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
LPV/r	• LPV is available coformulated with RTV in liquid and tablet formulations. • Tablets can be given without food, but they may be better tolerated when taken with a meal or snack.	• Poor palatability of liquid formulation (bitter taste) • Liquid formulation should be administered with food. • RTV is associated with a large number of drug–drug interactions. • Should not be administered to neonates before a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks (the span of time between the first day of the mother's last menstrual period and birth, plus the time elapsed after birth) and a postnatal age ≥14 days • Must be used with caution in patients with preexisting conduction system defects (can prolong PR and QT interval of an ECG)
ABC plus (3TC or FTC)	• Palatable liquid formulations • No food requirement • Available in FDC tablets (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class)	• Risk of ABC HSR; perform HLA-B*5701 screening before initiating ABC. • ABC use has been associated with CV disease and cardiac events in some, but not all, observational studies conducted in adults.
FTC/TAF for children aged ≥6 years	• Once-daily dosing • Small tablet size • Lower risk of TFV-associated renal and bone toxicity with TAF than with TDF in adults • Available in FDC tablets (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • Active against HBV; a recommended dual-NRTI option for individuals with HBV/HIV coinfection	• Limited data on the safety and efficacy of this combination in children • Increased lipid levels

Table 9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Antiretroviral Components Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children

ARV Class/ Agent(s)	Advantages	Disadvantages
TDF plus (3TC or FTC)	• Once-daily dosing for TDF • Resistance is slow to develop. • Lower risk of mitochondrial toxicity than other NRTIs • No food requirement • TDF is available as reduced-strength tablets and oral powder for use in younger children. • Available in FDC tablets (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class) • Active against HBV; a recommended dual-NRTI option for individuals with HBV/HIV coinfection.	• Limited pediatric experience • Potential bone and renal toxicity
ZDV plus (3TC or FTC)	• Extensive pediatric experience • Coformulations of ZDV and 3TC are available for children weighing ≥30 kg. • Palatable liquid formulations • No food requirement • FTC is available as a palatable liquid formulation that can be administered once daily.	• Bone marrow suppression and lipoatrophy with ZDV • ZDV requires twice-daily dosing.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; AE = adverse event; ARV = antiretroviral; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ATV = atazanavir; ATV/c = atazanavir/cobicistat; ATV/r = atazanavir/ritonavir; BIC = bictegravir; CNS = central nervous system; COBI = cobicistat; CrCl = creatinine clearance; CV = cardiovascular; CYP = cytochrome P450; DOR = doravirine; DRV = darunavir; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; DTG = dolutegravir; ECG = electrocardiogram; EFV = efavirenz; FDC = fixed-dose combination; FTC = emtricitabine; HBV = hepatitis B virus; HSR = hypersensitivity reaction; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV = lopinavir; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; PI = protease inhibitor; PPI = proton pump inhibitor; PR interval = interval between the onset of atrial depolarization to the onset of ventricular depolarization; QTc interval = duration of ventricular electrical activity, measured as the time between the start of the QRS complex and the end of the T wave, corrected for heart rate; RAL = raltegravir; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; SJS = Stevens-Johnson Syndrome; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TFV = tenofovir; TG = triglyceride; ZDV = zidovudine

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What Not to Start: Regimens Not Recommended for Initial Antiretroviral Therapy in Infants and Children

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This section describes antiretroviral (ARV) drugs and drug combinations that either are not recommended for use in initial antiretroviral treatment (ART) regimens in infants and children or lack sufficient data to recommend their use in children who have not received ART. Although many ARV agents and combinations are available, some are not recommended for use as part of an initial ART regimen, but they may be used in ARV-experienced children (see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure). Several ARV drugs that are no longer available or recommended for use in children for several years have been removed from this chapter, including the nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) stavudine and didanosine; the protease inhibitors (PIs) indinavir, nelfinavir, saquinavir, tipranavir, and fosamprenavir; and the fusion inhibitor enfuvirtide (see Archived Drugs in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). The PI ritonavir is no longer recommended for use as the sole PI in an ARV regimen but is used at a reduced dose as a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer (boosting agent) with other ARV drugs (e.g., atazanavir, darunavir).

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) classifies ARV drugs and drug combinations that are not recommended for use in ARV-naive children into one of three categories:

- *Not Recommended for Initial Therapy:* These include ARV drugs and drug combinations that are not recommended for initial ART regimens in children because they produce an inferior virologic response, they pose potential serious safety concerns (including potentially overlapping toxicities), they are associated with pharmacologic antagonism, or better options are available within a drug class. These drugs and drug combinations are listed in Table 10, and selected drugs or drug combinations are discussed below.
- *Insufficient Data to Recommend for Initial Therapy:* ARV drugs and drug combinations that are approved for use in adults but have insufficient, limited, or no PK and/or safety data for children cannot be recommended for initial therapy in children. However, these drugs and drug combinations may be appropriate to consider when managing treatment-experienced children (see Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy). These drugs also are listed in Table 10, and selected drugs or drug combinations are discussed below.
- *Antiretroviral Drug Regimens That Are Never Recommended:* Several ARV drugs and drug combinations should never be used in children or adults. They are summarized in Table 11. Clinicians also should be aware of the components of fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablets so that people do not inadvertently receive a double dose of a drug contained in such a combination.

Antiretroviral Drugs and Drug Combinations Not Recommended for Initial Therapy in Children

Atazanavir Without Ritonavir or Cobicistat Boosting

Although unboosted atazanavir (ATV) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in adolescents who are treatment-naive—aged ≥13 years and weighing ≥40 kg—who are unable to tolerate ritonavir (RTV), data from the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS

Clinical Trials Group (or IMPAACT)/Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (or PACTG) 1020A study indicate that adolescents require higher doses of unboosted ATV (as measured by milligram per meter squared of body surface area) than adults to achieve adequate drug concentrations.[1] Because of these findings, the Panel **does not recommend** using ATV without RTV boosting.

Efavirenz-Based Regimens for Children Aged ≥3 Months to 3 Years

Efavirenz (EFV) is approved by the FDA for use in children aged >3 months and weighing ≥3.5 kg. An EFV-based regimen was shown to have variable PK in studies of young children; therefore, at this time, the Panel **does not recommend** using EFV in children aged <3 years (see the Efavirenz section in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). When the use of EFV is being considered for children aged <3 years, cytochrome P450 (CYP) 2B6 genotyping should be performed, if available, to predict a child's metabolic rate for EFV. Therapeutic drug monitoring also can be considered. Additionally, EFV in children <3 years may be considered in the setting of HIV/tuberculosis coinfection because EFV is one of the few ARV drugs with minimal drug–drug interactions seen with other ARV drugs and rifampin.[2]

Elvitegravir-Based Regimens

Elvitegravir (EVG) is a first-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) that is available in two FDC tablets: EVG/cobicistat (EVG/c)/emtricitabine (FTC)/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) and EVG/c/FTC/tenofovir alafenamide (TAF). Cobicistat is a specific, potent CYP3A inhibitor that has no activity against HIV. It is used as a PK enhancer that allows once-daily dosing of EVG.

The FDC regimens EVG/c/FTC/TDF and EVG/c/FTC/TAF are approved by the FDA for use in ART-naive adults, children, and adolescents with HIV—EVG/c/FTC/TDF for those weighing ≥35 kg and EVG/c/FTC/TAF for those weighing ≥25 kg. However, the Panel does not recommend EVG-based regimens for initial ART in children or adolescents because EVG has a lower genetic barrier to the development of resistance compared to second-generation INSTIs.[3] The Panel recommends initial ART with INSTI-based regimens that include dolutegravir (DTG) or bictegravir, according to age and weight indications (see What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV).

Etravirine-Based Regimens

Etravirine (ETR) is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI) that has been studied in treatment-experienced children aged ≥1 years and is now approved by the FDA for use in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥10 kg.[4-6] ETR is associated with multiple interactions with other ARV drugs, including tipranavir/ritonavir, atazanavir/ritonavir, and unboosted PIs, and must be administered twice daily. The use of ETR likely will not be studied in children who are treatment-naive.

Maraviroc-Based Regimens

Maraviroc (MVC) is an entry inhibitor approved by the FDA for use in children weighing ≥2 kg who have CCR5-tropic HIV-1. It has been used infrequently in children. A dose-finding study administered both the liquid and tablet formulations of MVC to treatment-experienced children aged 2 to 18 years who were grouped into four age cohorts.[7] The initial dose was based on body surface area and scaled from the recommended adult dose. Dose adjustments were required in children who were not receiving a potent CYP3A4 inhibitor or inducer. A recent study of MVC in newborns at risk of HIV acquisition and weighing at least 2 kg established a dosing protocol that achieved target

exposures and was deemed safe. No apparent differences in PK parameters were observed among infants of mothers with exposure to EFV and those without. None of the infants had HIV infection, nor were they receiving potent CYP3A inhibitors.[8] As an entry inhibitor, MVC is under study in intensive treatment trials because of its hypothetical potential to limit the establishment of cell-associated viral reservoirs. However, MVC has several features that limit its role for routine uses, including multiple drug interactions, the need to be administered twice daily, and the fact that tropism assays must be performed prior to its use to ensure the presence of only CCR5-tropic virus. For those reasons, MVC **is not recommended** by the Panel for first-line treatment in any infant or child.

Cabotegravir With or Without Rilpivirine for Oral or Intramuscular Injections

In 2021, the FDA approved long-acting injectable (LAI) formulations of cabotegravir (CAB), a novel INSTI, and the NNRTI rilpivirine (RPV) for the treatment of HIV in adults to replace a current, stable ARV regimen in people with no prior history of treatment failure and no known or suspected resistance to CAB or RPV who have demonstrated sustained viral suppression (e.g., 3–6 months). These two LAI ARV drugs are co-packaged and marketed as Cabenuva. In March 2022, the FDA approved Cabenuva for use in children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg. An oral lead-in with the oral formulations of RPV and CAB may be considered to assess tolerability.[9] The LAI formulations can then be administered on a monthly or an every 2-month schedule. Clinical trials in adolescents are ongoing and planned for younger children (see the Cabotegravir section). The regimen of LAI CAB and RPV **is not approved or recommended** for initial ARV therapy.

Regimens That Contain Only Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

In adult trials, regimens that contain only NRTIs have shown less potent virologic activity than NNRTI-based or PI-based regimens.[10,11] Data on the efficacy of triple-NRTI regimens for treatment of children who have never received ARVs are limited to small observational studies.[12, 13] In a study on the use of the triple-NRTI regimen abacavir plus lamivudine (3TC) plus zidovudine in ARV-experienced children, this combination showed evidence of only modest viral suppression; only 10 of the 102 children had viral loads of <400 copies/mL at Week 48 of treatment.[14] Therefore, regimens that contain only NRTIs **are not recommended** for children who are treatment-naive or treatment-experienced.

Regimens That Contain Three Drug Classes

The Panel **does not recommend** using regimens that contain agents from three drug classes as initial regimens (e.g., an NRTI plus an NNRTI plus a PI or an INSTI plus an NRTI plus a PI or NNRTI). Although studies of regimens that contain three classes of drugs have demonstrated that these regimens are safe and effective in ARV-experienced children and adolescents, these regimens have not been studied as initial regimens in children and adolescents who are treatment-naive. These regimens also have the potential to induce resistance to three drug classes, which could severely limit future treatment options.[15-19] Ongoing studies are investigating the use of drugs from three drug classes to treat neonates.

Regimens That Contain Three Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors and a Non-nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor

Current data are insufficient to recommend using a regimen that contains three NRTIs plus an NNRTI in young infants. A review of nine cohorts from 13 European countries suggested that this four-drug regimen produced responses that were superior to the responses observed in infants

receiving boosted-PI regimens or three-drug NRTI regimens.[20] There has been speculation that poor tolerance and poor adherence to a PI-based regimen may account for some of the differences. The AntiRetroviral Research for Watoto (or ARROW) trial, conducted in Uganda and Zimbabwe, randomized 1,206 children (with a median age of 6 years) to receive either a standard NNRTI-based three-drug regimen (two NRTIs and one NNRTI) or a four-drug regimen (three NRTIs and one NNRTI). After a 36-week induction period, the children on the four-drug regimen continued treatment on a regimen that contained two NRTIs plus one NNRTI or a three-NRTI regimen. Although improvements in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts were observed at Week 36 (with a percentage change of approximately 14.4% in the four-drug arm compared with 12.6% in the three-drug arm), these benefits were not sustained after children switched to the three-drug regimens for the duration of the study. Furthermore, no differences in viral suppression rates were observed between the two arms at Week 36.[21] Because three-drug regimens have been shown to be effective and well tolerated and because efficacy data are lacking for the four-drug regimen, the Panel **currently does not recommend** the four-drug regimen.

Antiretroviral Drugs and Combinations With Insufficient Data to Recommend for Initial Therapy in Children

Several ARV drugs and drug regimens are not recommended for use as initial therapy in children who are treatment-naive or for specific age groups because of insufficient pediatric data. In some cases, new agents have shown promise in adult clinical trials but do not have sufficient pediatric PK and safety data to recommend their use as components of an initial therapeutic regimen in children. In addition, some dosing schedules may not be recommended in certain age groups because of insufficient data. As new data become available, these agents may become recommended agents or regimens, as summarized below and listed in Table 10.

Darunavir With Low-Dose Ritonavir-Based Regimens Administered Once Daily for Children Aged ≥3 Years to <12 Years

Whereas modeling studies identified a once-daily dosing schedule for darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) that is now approved by the FDA, the Panel is concerned about the lack of direct PK studies for this approach in individuals aged ≥3 years to <12 years. Therefore, the data are not sufficient to recommend once-daily dosing for initial therapy in this age group. For children aged ≥3 years to <12 years, twice-daily DRV/r is a *Preferred* drug combination. For older children who have undetectable viral loads while receiving a twice-daily DRV/r-based regimen, practitioners can consider switching to once-daily DRV/r dosing if no darunavir (DRV)-associated resistance mutations are present. Once-daily dosing helps support adherence by making this drug combination easier to use.

Fostemsavir-Containing Regimens

Fostemsavir (FTR) is an HIV-1 glycoprotein (gp120)-directed attachment inhibitor that is not approved for use in children. FTR was approved by the FDA in 2020 for use in adults in combination with other ARV drugs, with approval limited to heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug-resistant HIV who are failing their current ART regimen due to resistance, intolerance, or safety considerations. A study evaluating the safety, PK, and antiviral activity of FTR in children and adolescents ≥20 kg who are experiencing virologic failure on their current ART regimen and have dual or triple-class antiretroviral resistance (PENTA Foundation: NCT04648280) is ongoing and will be completed by June 2028. At this time, the Panel **does not recommend** FTR as part of an initial treatment regimen for HIV-1 infection in children.

Ibalizumab-Containing Regimens

Ibalizumab (IBA) is a humanized immunoglobulin G4 monoclonal antibody that binds to CD4 extracellular domain 2 and prevents conformational changes in the CD4-HIV envelope gp120 essential for viral entry, thereby blocking HIV entry into CD4 cells.[22] IBA is administered by intravenous infusion every 2 weeks following a single loading dose. IBA was approved by the FDA for use in adults with HIV-1 infection who are heavily pretreated, have multidrug-resistant virus, and are experiencing treatment failure. IBA has an orphan drug designation exempting the requirement for pediatric studies under federal law. At this time, because there is no experience with IBA in children, the Panel **does not recommend** its use as initial treatment for HIV-1 infection.

Lenacapavir-Containing Regimens

Lenacapavir (LEN) is a novel HIV-1 capsid inhibitor that interferes with three essential steps of HIV-1 replication: viral nuclear transport, virus assembly and release, and capsid core formation. Initiation of LEN requires the use of a combination of a subcutaneous (SQ) injection and an oral tablet, and maintenance consists of SQ injections every 26 (±2) weeks.[23] LEN was approved by the FDA in 2022 for use in heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug-resistant HIV-1 in whom current ARV regimens failed due to resistance, intolerance, or safety issues. LEN must be used in combination with an optimized background regimen. The safety and efficacy of LEN in children have not yet been established. This, together with the approval for use of LEN in ARV-experienced individuals who are experiencing virologic failure on their current regimens, is the reason why the Panel **does not recommend** LEN as initial treatment for HIV-1 in infants or children.

Two-Drug Regimens

In adults, oral two-drug/two-class ARV regimens can be used in people who have achieved and sustained viral suppression on a three-drug ART regimen and may be used for initial therapy in some individuals. In general, adults who have had viral suppression for at least 3 to 6 months and with known susceptibility to the ARV drugs in the two-drug regimen have success after switching to these regimens. Regimens that demonstrated efficacy in adult clinical trials include DTG plus RPV, DTG plus 3TC or emtricitabine, and boosted DRV plus DTG. At this time, no data support this strategy in children, and it **is not recommended** by the Panel. Although the Panel **does not recommend** oral two-drug regimens for initial treatment in children, some two-drug regimens might be considered for adolescents receiving ART when simplification or avoidance of NRTIs is desired based on data from adults, see Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy.

A two-drug/two-class regimen of LAI CAB and RPV has been approved by the FDA for use in adults and in children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg who have achieved and sustained viral suppression on another combination ARV regimen. However, this LAI regimen **is not recommended** for initial therapy.

Table 10. Antiretroviral Regimens or Components That Are Not Recommended for Initial Treatment of HIV Infection in Children and Adolescents

ARV Regimen	Rationale
Regimens containing only NRTIs	Inferior virologic efficacy
Regimens containing three drug classes	Potential to induce multiclass resistance Use as an initial regimen in children has not been studied
Regimens containing three NRTIs and one NNRTI	Added cost and complexity outweigh any benefit
Full-dose, dual-PI regimens	Insufficient data to recommend; potential for added toxicities
Oral regimens containing only two ARV drugs	Not FDA approved for pediatric use
ARV Component	**Rationale**
Unboosted ATV-containing regimens in children	Inadequate drug exposure
CAB	Not FDA approved for use in individuals who are ARV-naive or in children aged <12 years and weighing <35 kg
DRV/r in children <3 years	Potential for seizures
Once-daily DRV-based regimens in children aged ≥3 years to <12 years	Insufficient data to recommend
EFV-based regimens for children aged <3 years	CYP2B6 genotyping required to determine appropriate dosing
ETR-based regimens	Insufficient data to recommend; unlikely to be used as initial therapy
EVG-based regimens	First-generation INSTIs with lower barriers to resistance than second-generation INSTIs (BIC and DTG) that are now available for initial ARV regimens in children
FTR	Not FDA approved for use in adults who are ARV-naive or for pediatric use
IBA	Not FDA approved for use in adults who are ARV-naive or for pediatric use
LEN	Not FDA approved for use in adults who are ARV-naive or for pediatric use
LPV/r dosed once daily	Inadequate drug exposure
MVC-based regimens	Only effective for CCR5-tropic virus
TDF-containing regimens in children aged <2 years	Potential bone toxicity Appropriate dose has yet to be determined

Key: ARV = antiretroviral; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; CAB = cabotegravir; CYP = cytochrome P450; DRV = darunavir; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; ETR = etravirine; EVG = elvitegravir; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; FTR = fostemsavir; IBA = ibalizumab; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LEN = lenacapavir; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; MVC = maraviroc; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

Table 11. Antiretroviral Regimens or Components That Are Never Recommended for Treating HIV in Children and Adolescents

ARV Regimen or Component[a]	Rationale
One ARV Drug Alone (Monotherapy)	Rapid development of resistance Inferior antiviral activity compared with regimens that include ≥3 ARV drugs Monotherapy "holding" regimens are associated with more rapid CD4 count declines than nonsuppressive ART.
Two NRTIs Alone	Rapid development of resistance Inferior antiviral activity compared with regimens that include ≥3 ARV drugs
Any Regimen Containing 3TC Plus FTC	Similar resistance profile and no additive benefit
Any Regimen Containing TDF and TAF	No data to support potential additive efficacy or toxicity
Dual-NNRTI Combinations	Enhanced toxicity
TDF Plus ABC Plus (3TC *or* FTC) as a Triple-NRTI Regimen	High rate of early viral failure when this triple-NRTI regimen was used as initial therapy in adults who are treatment-naive
NVP as Component of Initial ARV Therapy Regimen in Adolescent Girls With CD4 Counts >250 Cells/mm^3 or Adolescent Boys With CD4 Counts >400 Cells/mm^3	Increased incidence of symptomatic (including serious and potentially fatal) hepatic events in these groups

[a] Several ARV drugs that are no longer available or that have not been recommended for use in children for several years have been removed from this chapter, including the NRTIs stavudine and didanosine; the protease inhibitors fosamprenavir, indinavir, nelfinavir, saquinavir, and tipranavir; and the fusion inhibitor enfuvirtide (see Archived Drugs).

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; FTC = emtricitabine; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

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Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV

Updated: December 19, 2024
Reviewed: December 19, 2024

Panel's Recommendations

Antiretroviral Management for Infants With Exposure to HIV During the *In Utero* and Intrapartum Periods

- All newborns with *in utero* (antepartum) or intrapartum exposure to HIV should receive one or more antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, dosed appropriately for the infant's gestational age and weight and initiated as close to the time of birth as possible, preferably within 6 hours (AII).

ARV regimen selection for infants with *in utero* or intrapartum exposure to HIV should be based on predicted risk for transmission, determined by maternal HIV RNA levels (see Table 12, Table 13, Table 13.1, and Figure 1 below) (AII).

Infants at high risk of HIV infection from *in utero* or intrapartum exposure, defined as being **perinatally exposed to viremia (HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL) in the 4 weeks prior to delivery**, should be provided a three-drug ARV regimen, administered from birth for 2–6 weeks, that serves as presumptive HIV therapy or enhanced prophylaxis. If the duration of the three-drug regimen is shorter than 6 weeks, zidovudine (ZDV) should be continued alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis (AII).

- **Infants at low risk** of *in utero* and intrapartum HIV acquisition, defined as being **perinatally exposed to HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL from 20 weeks of gestation through delivery**, should receive ZDV alone for a duration of 2 weeks (AII).
- **Infants not meeting criteria for high or low risk** should have ARV regimens and durations based on case-specific factors related to the level and timing of viremia during the pregnancy (AII) (see Table 13).
- An HIV nucleic acid test (NAT) should generally be performed at birth for all infants (AII) but is not necessary **for infants at low risk who are not being breastfed** (BIII). See Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for guidance about infant testing.

Antiretroviral Management for Infants With Exposure to HIV During the Breastfeeding Period

- **Recommendations about extended ARV prophylaxis** are based on the current and anticipated maternal virologic status during breastfeeding (see Table 14 and Table 14.1 below). Ideally, plans should be made during the antepartum period; reassessment should take place both at delivery and regularly during the breastfeeding period (AII).

For infants at low risk of HIV acquisition during breastfeeding, some Panel members do not recommend extended ARV prophylaxis; however, other Panel members do recommend extended ARV prophylaxis with either nevirapine (NVP) or lamivudine (3TC) (CIII). The Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panels) did not reach consensus. Infants are considered at low risk of transmission during breastfeeding when (1) maternal antiretroviral therapy is being taken while breastfeeding and sustained maternal virologic suppression (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) was achieved for at least 3 months prior to delivery and (2) the provider and patient are confident that maternal ART adherence will be maintained during breastfeeding (AII).

- **For infants currently at low risk of HIV acquisition during breastfeeding but with concerns for future risk**, the Panels recommend extended ARV prophylaxis with either NVP or 3TC (BIII). Adherence support should always be provided during breastfeeding (Table 14) (AIII).
- **Extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding, when used, should ensure continuous prophylaxis through the postnatal period.** Most experts recommend transitioning to NVP or 3TC after the completion of initial ZDV prophylaxis. However, either NVP or 3TC can be given from birth, replacing ZDV and providing both initial postnatal prophylaxis and extended prophylaxis during breastfeeding (BIII).

- Extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding, when used, should continue until either 6 weeks after the last exposure to breast milk or 6 weeks after concerns about maternal virologic suppression have resolved—whichever occurs first (BIII).

Recommendations for Infant Antiretroviral Management When the Infant is Exposed to New Viremia

- Breastfeeding should be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated (see Situations to Consider Modifying or Stopping Breastfeeding in Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding) (AII). Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when HIV RNA is ≥200 copies/mL (CIII).
- An infant HIV NAT should be performed (AII) (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for guidance about infant testing).
- **New viremia with HIV RNA ≥200 copies/mL**: If a maternal HIV RNA level ≥200 copies/mL (viremia) develops or there is presumed viremia (e.g., reports nonadherence to ARVs), the Panels recommend the initiation of a three-drug ARV regimen for the infant for 4–6 weeks (AII) (see Table 14 and Table 14.1).
- New viremia with HIV RNA <200 copies/mL: When maternal viremia that is quantifiable but <200 copies/mL develops, some Panel members recommend the initiation of a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy, other members recommend the initiation of single-drug ARV prophylaxis (NVP or 3TC), and others recommend infant ARV management based on repeat maternal HIV RNA testing (CII). The Panels did not reach consensus on management; consultation with an expert is suggested (see Table 14).

Infant ARV Management When Perinatal HIV Exposure is Related to a New Diagnosis of HIV During Breastfeeding

- Infants exposed to newly diagnosed maternal HIV infection during breastfeeding should be managed like infants at high risk of *in utero* or intrapartum HIV acquisition and receive a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen for 2–6 weeks (see Table 14) and replacement feeding. If the duration of the three-drug regimen is shorter than 6 weeks, ZDV should be continued alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis (AII). See Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedules for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for guidance about infant testing.

Providers with questions about ARV management of perinatal HIV exposure or exposure to HIV during breastfeeding should consult an expert in pediatric HIV infection or the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765), which provides free clinical consultation on all aspects of perinatal HIV, including newborn care (AIII).

Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional

Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; III = Expert opinion

Risk of *In Utero* or Intrapartum HIV Transmission and Antiretroviral Management of Infants

All infants with *in utero* or intrapartum exposure to HIV should receive antiretroviral (ARV) drugs during the immediate neonatal period to reduce the risk of HIV transmission, with selection of the appropriate ARV regimen guided by the level of transmission risk. HIV transmission can occur *in utero*, intrapartum, or during breastfeeding.

This section addresses ARV management of infants with exposure to HIV-1 recommended by the Panel on the Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission (Perinatal Panel) and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (Pediatric Panel). Information about ARV management for infants perinatally exposed to HIV-2 infection is available in HIV-2 Infection and Pregnancy.

The maternal viral load (HIV RNA level) is the most important risk factor for *in utero* and intrapartum HIV transmission to the infant. Infants are at an increased risk for HIV acquisition when antiretroviral therapy (ART) is not being taken during pregnancy and when antepartum treatment does not result in antepartum viral suppression, particularly in the 4 weeks prior to delivery, but even in the second half of pregnancy. Higher viral load correlates with higher risk of transmission. A spectrum of transmission risk depends on these and other factors, including mode of delivery and health status during pregnancy and delivery. Although current assays can detect very low levels of HIV RNA, data from studies on transmission and viral load that were conducted prior to the availability of highly sensitive tests indicate that an HIV RNA level <50 copies/mL sufficiently predicts low risk of HIV transmission.[1,2]

Risk of HIV Transmission In Utero

The risk of *in utero* HIV transmission is believed to increase with gestational age, with the highest rate of *in utero* infection occurring in the third trimester. However, methodological challenges in assessing the timing of fetal infection limit the precision of risk estimates by gestational age. A definitive diagnosis of *in utero* infection during pregnancy would require invasive sampling, carrying risk that is not ethically or medically indicated. There are case reports of HIV being identified in fetal tissue as early as 8-, 15-, and 20-weeks' gestation, but whether they represented established infection remains unclear.[3-5] In a study of fetal thymuses in the second trimester, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing revealed that 2 of 100 samples had HIV-1.[6] For this reason, the Panels have a 20 week–gestational age as a conservative gestational age threshold below which *in utero* transmission is unlikely to occur. A modeling study using profiles of viral culture positivity and seroconversion from a cohort of 95 French infants suggests that the vast majority of *in utero* HIV infection occurs in the third trimester.[7] Another approach has been to examine how well ARVs initiated at different gestational ages prevent *in utero* transmission. Among 34 women in a U.K./Irish cohort who started ARVs during pregnancy, HIV transmission was more likely when ARVs were started later in pregnancy (median gestational age at initiation of 30.1 weeks, interquartile range [IQR] 27.4–32.6 weeks vs. 25.9 weeks, IQR 22.4–28.7 weeks, $P < 0.001$).[8] Another model made estimates of relative time of *in utero* or intrapartum transmission based on timing of ARV initiation; they estimated 3% of transmissions occurred before 14 weeks' gestation, 17% from 14 to 36 weeks, 50% from 36 weeks through onset of labor, and 30% from intrapartum exposure.[9] In summary, *in utero* HIV transmission in the context of maternal viremia is considered rare in the first trimester, uncommon but possible in the second trimester, and most common in the third trimester.

Risk of HIV Transmission Intrapartum (During Labor and Delivery)

The highest risk of vertical HIV transmission is from exposure in the intrapartum period (i.e., during labor and delivery). Risk increases with the level of maternal viremia.[2] Recommended interventions to reduce the risk of intrapartum transmission include ART for all pregnancies, intravenous zidovudine (ZDV) during labor and delivery, and scheduled cesarean delivery when there is a detectable HIV-1 viral load >1,000 copies/mL (see Intrapartum HIV Care).

Transmission Risk Assessment by HIV RNA Levels and Antenatal Time Period

Table 12 below summarizes *in utero* and intrapartum HIV transmission risk according to HIV RNA levels at three antenatal time periods for the purpose of selecting infant ARV prophylaxis. Because robust data are not available to define thresholds of risk across pregnancy, the Panels have defined time points balancing available evidence with implications for clinical management. Transmission

risk categories inform ARV choice and management of prophylaxis and presumptive HIV therapy for infants with HIV exposure.

The assessment of transmission risk is generally but not exclusively dependent on HIV RNA levels during the antepartum period. The Perinatal Panel recommends assessing maternal **HIV RNA levels at the initial antenatal visit with a review of prior levels, 2 to 4 weeks after initiating (or changing) ART, and monthly until RNA levels are undetectable. Maternal HIV RNA levels should also be assessed at least every 3 months during pregnancy and at approximately 36 weeks of gestation, or within 4 weeks of delivery** (see Initial Evaluation and Continued Monitoring of HIV During Pregnancy). However, discussion around transmission risk may not align exactly with the recommended time frames, and clinicians must continue to utilize judgment to assess risk. For example, viremia could be presumed based on reports of poor adherence for several weeks, even without a documented test. Conversely, a missed HIV RNA test in a patient with years of virologic control may not merit concern. Incident HIV infection during pregnancy and lack of receipt of ART have been previously cited as risk factors for transmission; the current guidelines incorporate the risks of those scenarios within the framework of documented or presumed viremia.

Table 12. Transmission Risk Assessment by HIV RNA Levels and Antenatal Time Period

Antenatal Time Period			Transmission Risk	
HIV RNA at <20 Weeks' Gestation	**HIV RNA ≥20** Weeks' Gestation to 4 Weeks Prior to Delivery	**HIV RNA at ≤4** Weeks Prior to Delivery	In Utero	Intrapartum
N/A[a]	N/A[a]	≥50 copies/mL[b]	High	High
N/A[a]	≥50 copies/mL[b]	<50 copies/mL	Low to moderate	Low
≥50 copies/mL[b]	<50 copies/mL	<50 copies/mL	Low	Low
<50 copies/mL	<50 copies/mL	<50 copies/mL	Low	Low

[a] HIV RNA levels in this time period do not change the transmission risk categorization because transmission risk is determined by viremia later in gestation.

[b] HIV RNA values of ≥50 copies/mL can be documented or presumed (e.g., early [acute or recent] HIV, new diagnosis of HIV, or known lapse in adherence).

Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV

Historically, the use of ARV drugs in the newborn period was referred to as ARV prophylaxis because it primarily focused on protection against newborn acquisition of HIV. More recently, clinicians have additionally sought to consider and optimize the management of newborns at elevated risk for HIV acquisition *in utero* and initiate three-drug ARV regimens as presumptive HIV therapy. In this section, the following terms will be used:

- **ARV Prophylaxis:** The administration of ARV drugs to a newborn without HIV infection to reduce the risk of HIV acquisition.
- **Presumptive HIV Therapy:** The administration of a three-drug ARV regimen to newborns at elevated risk of HIV acquisition. Presumptive HIV therapy is intended to be early treatment for a newborn who has already acquired HIV but doesn't have documentation of infection; it also

serves as enhanced ARV prophylaxis against HIV acquisition among infants at high risk but not yet infected.

- **ART:** The administration of a three-drug ARV regimen to infants and children with documented HIV infection (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and What to Start in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines).

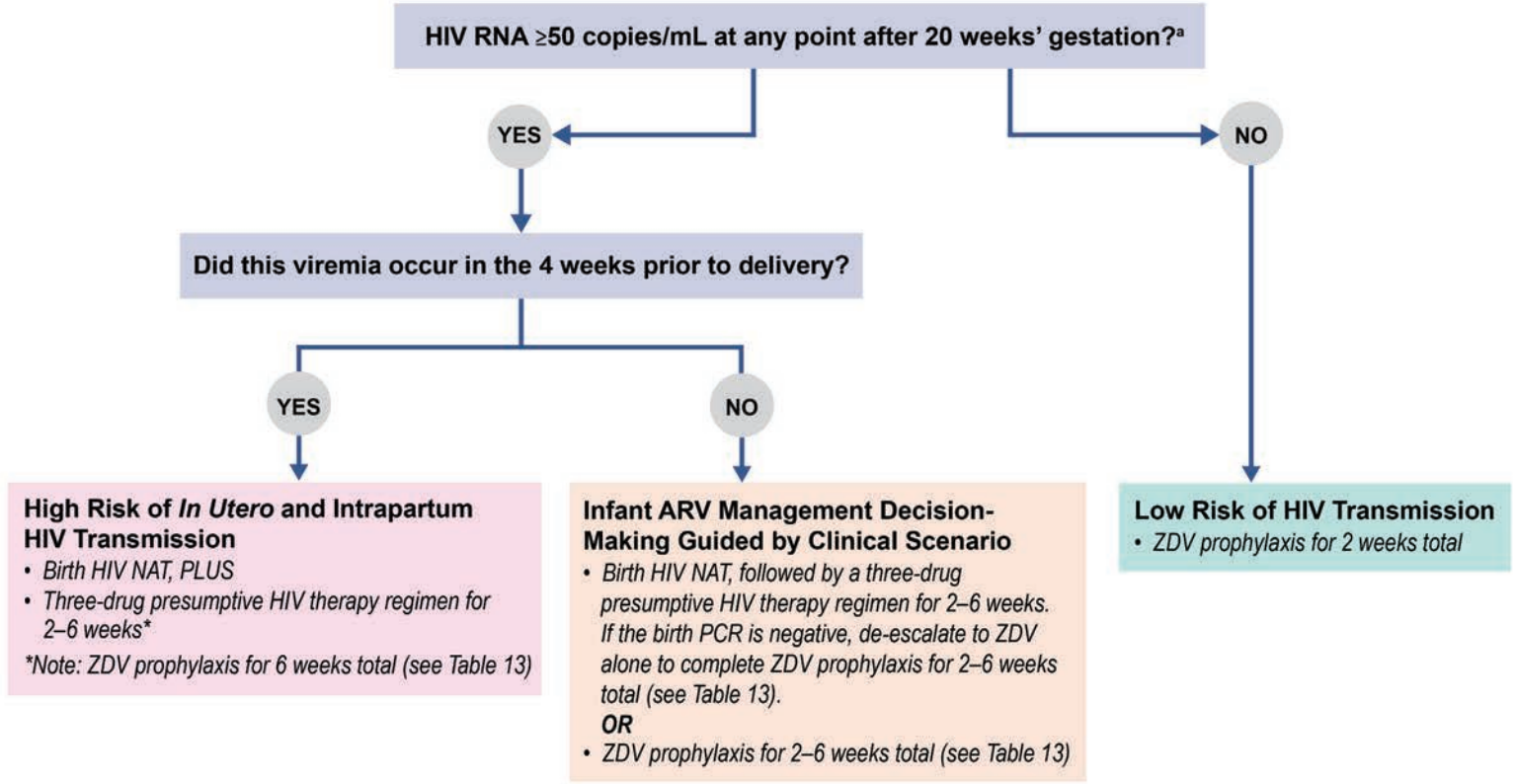
The terms ARV prophylaxis and presumptive HIV therapy describe the potential roles of ARV drugs when the HIV status of an infant is unknown, and they often overlap in neonates at high risk. For example, a presumptive HIV therapy regimen also provides drug exposure that would serve as prophylaxis for a newborn. However, it is important to note that some two-drug and three-drug ARV regimens used historically were designed and studied as prophylaxis, including some that used doses of nevirapine (NVP) that target lower exposures than the doses used for treatment of HIV infection.

The Panels recommend initiating ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy as soon as possible after birth, preferably within 6 hours. Although the maximum interval during which newborn ARV prophylaxis can be initiated and still be beneficial is unknown, most studies support providing ARV drugs as early as possible after delivery.[10-15]

The guidance summarized in this section applies to infants perinatally exposed to HIV unless otherwise noted. The algorithm in Figure 1 and Table 13 provide an overview of neonatal ARV management recommendations according to the risk of HIV transmission from *in utero* and intrapartum exposure based on HIV RNA levels at time points during pregnancy and other factors, such as receipt of and adherence to ART. Table 13.1 summarizes the recommended ARV dosing for prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy in newborns with *in utero* or intrapartum HIV exposure. Additional information about dose selection for newborns, including preterm infants (<37 weeks gestational age), can be found in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines.

The National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765) is a federally funded service that provides free clinical consultation on difficult cases to providers who are providing HIV care during pregnancy and for newborns after pregnancy, and consultants can provide referrals to local or regional pediatric HIV specialists.

Figure 1. Algorithm for Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum HIV Exposure by Risk of HIV Transmission



[a] Early (acute or recent) HIV infection in pregnancy may result in a scenario where viremia occurs early in gestation but is suppressed after 20 weeks and through the remainder of pregnancy until delivery. In these situations, decision-making guided by the clinical scenario is recommended (see Table 13).

Key: ARV = antiretroviral; NAT = nucleic acid test; PCR = polymerase chain reaction; ZDV = zidovudine

Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV

Clinical Setting	Risk of Acquisition		Neonatal ARV Management[a,b]	Rationale
	In Utero	Intrapartum		
High Risk of Acquisition				
HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL in the 4 weeks prior to delivery Viremia can be documented by lab or presumed by other clinical factors (e.g., new diagnosis, ART adherence problems, reports of having stopped ART prior to delivery).	High	High	Presumptive HIV therapy using a three-drug regimen of ZDV and 3TC plus either NVP (treatment dose) *or* RAL Duration is from birth for 2–6 weeks; consensus not reached by members of the Panel.[c] If the duration of a three-drug regimen is <6 weeks, and the birth NAT is negative, ZDV should be continued alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis. HIV NAT obtained before or immediately after starting presumptive therapy with three drugs[d,e]	Viremia in the 4 weeks immediately prior to delivery confers very high risk for *in utero* and intrapartum transmission. Plasma HIV RNA levels of 50–200 copies/mL could be expected to confer lower risk than those >200 copies/mL but could also be an indicator of poor adherence and raise concern for higher levels of viremia at other times.
Low Risk of Acquisition				
HIV RNA <50 copies/mL from 20 weeks' gestation through delivery Ideally documented by at least two consecutive tests at least four weeks apart with HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, but can be based on clinical judgment of providers.	Low	Low	ZDV for 2 weeks	Sustained virologic suppression from 20 weeks' gestation is associated with extremely low risk of transmission *in utero* or intrapartum. Although *in utero* transmission events have been documented prior to 20 weeks, the extremely low frequency of these events does not merit the presumptive HIV therapy approach.
Other Clinical Scenarios				
HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL at >20 weeks' gestation, but HIV RNA <50 copies/mL in the 4 weeks prior to delivery	Low to Moderate	Low	HIV NAT at Birth[d,e] *Two Options for ARV Management* 1. Presumptive HIV therapy with a three-drug regimen,	Viremia in the late second and third trimester elevates risk of *in utero* transmission (increasing risk with higher HIV RNA levels and longer duration

Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV

Clinical Setting	Risk of Acquisition		Neonatal ARV Management[a,b]	Rationale
	In Utero	Intrapartum		
			as described above for infants at high risk. If birth the HIV NAT is negative, de-escalate the prophylaxis regimen to ZDV alone to complete 2–6 weeks total.[c] 2. ZDV prophylaxis for 2–6 weeks	of viremia). *Option 1.* Some Panel members believe that the potential benefit of early treatment for an infant who acquired the infection *in utero* merits a presumptive HIV therapy approach. *Option 2.* Other Panel members believe that the marginal potential benefit and anticipated low frequency of *in utero* infection do not merit the additional complexity of and potential toxicity of presumptive HIV therapy and favor ZDV prophylaxis only. All infants should receive a minimum of 2 weeks ZDV prophylaxis, but up to 6 weeks may be used when indicated based on risk assessment.
Early (acute or recent) HIV at any point during pregnancy	Moderate to High depending on maternal HIV RNA levels and weeks' gestation	High if HIV RNA ≥50 copies/mL in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy	HIV NAT at birth[d,e] Manage infant ARVs according to the level and timing of the maternal viremia as described in the rows above (just as for an infant exposed to established infection).	Early or recent HIV diagnosed at any time during pregnancy is a unique situation because very high HIV RNA levels place infants at high risk of HIV acquisition. For infants perinatally exposed to known HIV infection, risk of transmission increases when viremia occurs later in pregnancy. Some Panel members would manage all cases with presumptive therapy, whereas others would only use it for viremia after 20 weeks' gestation.

Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV

Clinical Setting	Risk of Acquisition		Neonatal ARV Management[a,b]	Rationale
	In Utero	Intrapartum		
Unconfirmed maternal HIV status with at least one positive HIV test at delivery or postpartum *or* Newborn has a positive HIV antibody test	High/ Uncertain	High/ Uncertain	HIV NAT at birth[d,e] Presumptive HIV therapy with a three-drug regimen as described above for newborns with a high risk of *in utero* or intrapartum HIV acquisition If supplemental testing confirms a negative maternal HIV status, discontinue infant ARV drugs immediately.	Supplemental maternal HIV testing and/or NAT testing of the infant is required to determine the level of risk and need to continue infant presumptive HIV therapy or initiate ART.[e]

[a] Infant ARVs should be initiated in the first 6 hours after delivery, especially for infants with a high risk of acquisition. See Table 13.1 for ARV dosing.

[b] See HIV-2 Infection and Pregnancy for ARV prophylaxis recommendations for infants perinatally exposed to HIV-2 mono-infection. In the event of maternal HIV-2 infection or HIV-1 and HIV-2 coinfection, the infant ARV regimen should be based on the determination of low or high risk of HIV-1 transmission as described in the above table using ARVs that are active against HIV-2. Because HIV-2 is not susceptible to NVP, RAL should be used in presumptive HIV therapy regimens for infants at high risk of HIV acquisition with exposure to HIV-2 or to both HIV-1 and HIV-2.

[c] The optimal duration of three-drug regimen in newborns who are at a high risk for HIV acquisition is unknown. Newborns who are at a high risk for HIV acquisition should receive the ZDV component for 6 weeks. The other two ARVs, (3TC and NVP) *or* (3TC and RAL), may be administered for 2 to 6 weeks; the recommended duration for treatment with three ARVs varies depending on infant HIV NAT results, maternal viral load at the time of delivery, and the additional risk factors for HIV transmission. Consultation with an expert in pediatric HIV is recommended when selecting a therapy duration because this decision should be based on case-specific risk factors and interim infant HIV NAT results.

[d] NAT test at birth should be obtained before or immediately after starting ARVs. See Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children for additional information about HIV testing and NATs.

[e] When a newborn HIV NAT is positive, infant ART should be initiated without waiting for the results of confirmatory HIV NAT testing, given the low likelihood of a false-positive HIV NAT (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children with HIV Infection and What to Start in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines). However, the specimen for confirmatory HIV testing should be obtained prior to ART initiation.

Note: Providers with questions about ARV management of infants should consult an expert in pediatric HIV infection or the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; NAT = nucleic acid test; NVP = nevirapine; the Panels = the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV; RAL = raltegravir; ZDV = zidovudine

Table 13.1. Drug Dosing Recommendations for Antiretroviral Prophylaxis and Presumptive HIV Therapy in Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV[a]

This table provides dosing for antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis and presumptive HIV therapy in infants with *in utero* or intrapartum exposure to HIV. Dosing for additional ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding is provided in Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed.

For infants with HIV infection, recommendations for initial ARV therapy regimens and ARV dosing are available in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines; see What to Start and Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information.

<table>
<tr><th>ARV Drug</th><th>Drug Doses by Gestational Age at Birth</th></tr>
<tr><td>ZDV

Note: For newborns who are unable to tolerate oral agents, the IV dose is 75% of the oral dose while maintaining the same dosing interval.</td><td>≥35 Weeks of Gestation at Birth

Birth to Age ≤6 Weeks

• ZDV 4 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily or alternative simplified weight-band dosing (see table below)

Simplified Weight-Band Dosing for Newborns Aged ≥35 Weeks of Gestation From Birth to 4 Weeks
<table>
<tr><th>Weight Band</th><th>Volume of ZDV 10 mg/mL Oral Syrup Twice Daily</th></tr>
<tr><td>2 kg to <3 kg</td><td>1 mL</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 kg to <4 kg</td><td>1.5 mL</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 kg to <5 kg</td><td>2 mL</td></tr>
</table>
≥30 Weeks to <35 Weeks of Gestation at Birth

Birth to Age 2 Weeks

• ZDV 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily

Age 2 Weeks to ≤6 Weeks

• ZDV 3 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily

<30 Weeks of Gestation at Birth

Birth to Age 4 Weeks

• ZDV 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily

Age 4 Weeks to ≤6 Weeks

• ZDV 3 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>3TC</td><td>≥32 Weeks of Gestation at Birth

Birth to Age <4 Weeks

• 3TC 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
</table>

Table 13.1. Drug Dosing Recommendations for Antiretroviral Prophylaxis and Presumptive HIV Therapy in Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV[a]

<table>
<tr><th>ARV Drug</th><th>Drug Doses by Gestational Age at Birth</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Age ≥4 Weeks to ≤6 weeks
• 3TC 4 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">NVP[b]

Note: These are NVP treatment doses for a presumptive HIV therapy regimen. NVP dosing for extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding is provided in Table 14.1.

Note: Do not use NVP if HIV-2 infection (or HIV-2 co-infection with HIV-1) is present or suspected; see HIV-2- Infection and Pregnancy.</td><td>≥37 Weeks of Gestation at Birth
Birth to Age ≤6 Weeks
• NVP 6 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>≥34 Weeks to <37 Weeks of Gestation at Birth
Birth to Age <1 Week
• NVP 4 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily
Age ≥1 Week to ≤6 Weeks
• NVP 6 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>≥32 Weeks to <34 Weeks of Gestation at Birth
Birth to Age <2 Weeks
• NVP 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily
Age ≥2 Weeks to <4 Weeks
• NVP 4 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily
Age ≥4 Weeks to ≤6 Weeks
• NVP 6 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>RAL</td><td>≥37 Weeks of Gestation at Birth and Weighing ≥2 kg[c]
Birth to Age 6 Weeks
<table>
<tr><th>Body Weight</th><th>Volume (Dose) of RAL 10 mg/mL Suspension</th></tr>
<tr><td>Birth to 1 Week: Once-Daily Dosing</td><td>Approximately 1.5 mg/kg per dose</td></tr>
<tr><td>2 kg to <3 kg</td><td>0.4 mL (4 mg) once daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 kg to <4 kg</td><td>0.5 mL (5 mg) once daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 kg to <5 kg</td><td>0.7 mL (7 mg) once daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>1 to 4 Weeks: Twice-Daily Dosing</td><td>Approximately 3 mg/kg per dose</td></tr>
<tr><td>2 kg to <3 kg</td><td>0.8 mL (8 mg) twice daily</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 kg to <4 kg</td><td>1 mL (10 mg) twice daily</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

Table 13.1. Drug Dosing Recommendations for Antiretroviral Prophylaxis and Presumptive HIV Therapy in Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV[a]

ARV Drug	Drug Doses by Gestational Age at Birth
	4 kg to <5 kg: 1.5 mL (15 mg) twice daily **4 to 6 Weeks: Twice-Daily Dosing — Approximately 6 mg/kg per dose** 3 kg to <4 kg: 2.5 mL (25 mg) twice daily 4 kg to <6 kg: 3 mL (30 mg) twice daily 6 kg to <8 kg: 4 mL (40 mg) twice daily
ABC[d] Note: The Panels do not recommend ABC as part of three-drug regimen for newborns with HIV exposure. However, in situations where ZDV is not available or the infant has ZDV-associated toxicity, ABC could be considered an alternative to ZDV.	≥37 Weeks' Gestation at Birth *Birth to ≤1 Month* • ABC 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily *Age ≥1 Month to ≤6 Weeks* • ABC 4 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily

[a] The optimal duration of three-drug regimens for newborns at high risk of HIV acquisition is unknown; all infants should receive the ZDV component of the three-drug regimen for 6 weeks. The other two ARVs, (3TC and NVP) *or* (3TC and RAL), may be administered for 2 to 6 weeks; the recommended duration for these ARVs varies depending on infant HIV NAT results, maternal viral load at the time of delivery, and additional risk factors for HIV transmission. Consultation with an expert in pediatric HIV is recommended when selecting a therapy duration because this decision should be based on case-specific risk factors and interim infant HIV NAT results.

[b] The NVP doses for infants ≥32 to <37 weeks' gestation at birth and infants ≥37 weeks' gestation at birth are not yet approved by the FDA. The FDA also has not approved a dose of NVP for infants aged <1 month. The doses for infants ≥32 to <34 weeks' gestation at birth are based on modeling and might underestimate potential toxicity in infants of 32 to <34 weeks gestational age because the doses used to develop the model were lower than the doses now recommended. See Nevirapine in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines for additional information about dosing.

[c] RAL dosing is increased at 1 week and 4 weeks of age because metabolism by UGT1A1 is low at birth and increases rapidly during the next 4 to 6 weeks of life. No dosing information is available for preterm infants or infants weighing <2 kg at birth. The current dosing regimen with two dose changes in the first month of life may be challenging for some families. To minimize dosing changes, some experts increase to the 3-mg/kg twice-daily dose upon discharge on day 4 or 5 of life.

[d] ABC is approved by the FDA for use in children aged ≥3 months when administered as part of an ARV regimen. ABC also has been reported to be safe in infants and children ≥1 month of age. More recently, an ABC dosing recommendation using PK simulation models has been endorsed by the WHO using weight-band dosing for full-term infants from birth to 1 month of age. See Abacavir in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines for additional information about the use of ABC between birth and 1 month of age. At this time, the Panels do not recommend ABC as part of a presumptive HIV therapy regimen. However, in situations where ZDV is not available or the infant has ZDV-associated toxicity, ABC could be considered an alternative to ZDV. This substitution should be considered in circumstances where increased risk of ZDV toxicity may exist, such as in infants with anemia or neutropenia. Because of ABC-associated hypersensitivity, negative testing for HLA-B*5701 allele should be confirmed prior to the administration of ABC.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ARV = antiretroviral; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; IV = intravenous; NVP = nevirapine; the Panels = the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV; PK = pharmacokinetic; RAL = raltegravir; UGT = uridine diphosphate glucotransferase; WHO = World Health Organization; ZDV = zidovudine

Recommendations for Infant Antiretroviral Drugs in Specific Clinical Situations

In this section, Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With In Utero or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV, and Figure 1. Antiretroviral Management Algorithm for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum HIV Exposure by Risk of Transmission, the Panels present available data and recommendations for ARV management of newborns born with *in utero* and intrapartum exposure to HIV.

Infants at High Risk of HIV Acquisition From In Utero *or Intrapartum Exposure*

The Panels recommend that all newborns at high risk for HIV acquisition from *in utero* and intrapartum exposure **have an HIV nucleic acid test (NAT) at birth to determine *in utero* HIV infection status and receive presumptive HIV therapy** (see Table 13 and Figure 1).[14,16-21] HIV infection newly diagnosed during pregnancy is generally associated with high HIV RNA levels that would confer an elevated high risk of transmission to the infant, especially in the case of recent (early or acute) infection (see Table 13 and Early (Acute and Recent) HIV Infection).

Presumptive HIV Therapy

Early, effective treatment of HIV infection in infants restricts the viral reservoir size, reduces HIV genetic variability, and modifies the immune response.[22-31] Because of these potential benefits of early ART the Panels recommend a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen consisting of two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (ZDV plus lamivudine [3TC]) plus either a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI) (NVP at treatment dose, see Table 13.1) or an integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) (raltegravir [RAL]) for newborns at high risk of acquisition of HIV:

- ZDV plus 3TC plus NVP (at treatment dose, see Table 13.1) *or*
- ZDV plus 3TC plus RAL

In the event of maternal HIV-2 infection or concomitant HIV-1 and HIV-2 infection, the RAL-containing regimen should be used for presumptive therapy because HIV-2 is not susceptible to NVP.

Although no clinical trials have compared the safety and efficacy of presumptive HIV therapy with single-drug or two-drug regimens, existing data suggest that presumptive HIV therapy in neonates has not been associated with serious adverse events (see Antiretroviral Drug Safety of Infant Prophylaxis below).

The pharmacokinetic (PK) and safety data of the three-drug regimens used for presumptive HIV therapy have provided reassuring evidence for its use in the neonatal period. Although the use of NVP to prevent HIV transmission has been found to be safe in neonates and newborns of low birthweight, these prophylaxis-dose regimens target trough drug levels that are at least tenfold lower than targeted therapeutic levels. However, studies of treatment doses of NVP and RAL have established safe doses that achieve targeted PK parameters.[21,32-37]

At this time, the Panels do not recommend abacavir (ABC) as part of a presumptive HIV therapy regimen. However, in situations where ZDV is not available or the infant has ZDV-associated toxicity, ABC could be considered an alternative to ZDV. This substitution should be considered in

circumstances where an increased risk of ZDV toxicity may exist, such as in infants with anemia or neutropenia. Negative testing for HLA-B*5701 allele should be confirmed prior to the administration of ABC. New dosing recommendations for ABC in neonates based on the IMPAACT P1106 trial and two observational European and African cohorts are now available from the World Health Organization (WHO).[38] ABC is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in neonates and infants aged <3 months. However, 2 mg/kg per dose twice daily has been modeled using PK simulation and is endorsed by WHO using weight-band dosing for full-term infants from birth through 1 month of age. Limited observational data suggested safety of ABC when initiated in neonates <1 month of age (see Abacavir in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines).[39]

The optimal duration of a three-drug regimen in newborns at high risk of HIV acquisition is unknown. Consulting an expert in pediatric HIV is recommended when selecting a therapy duration based on case-specific risk factors and interim HIV NAT results. HIV NAT diagnostic testing at birth (prior to or immediately after starting ARVs) is recommended for infants at high risk for HIV acquisition. A positive birth NAT test indicates *in utero* HIV infection. Panel members varied in their recommendations for the duration of presumptive HIV therapy. Some Panel members would opt to discontinue additional medications and complete 6 weeks ZDV prophylaxis alone if infant birth NAT results are negative, whereas other Panel members would continue presumptive HIV therapy for 2 to 6 weeks, depending on the risk of HIV transmission. Panel members agreed that ZDV should be continued for 6 weeks in all scenarios, regardless of the duration of the other two drugs. If the birth NAT is positive, the infant should receive an ART regimen recommended for the treatment of HIV infection (see What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV and Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines).

Newborns at Low Risk of HIV Acquisition from In Utero *or Intrapartum Exposure*

An infant perinatally exposed to HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL and no HIV RNA levels ≥50 copies/mL after 20 weeks' gestation is considered to have low risk of HIV acquisition and should receive prophylaxis with ZDV alone for 2 weeks.

When ART is taken during pregnancy and labor and viral load is undetectable near or at the time of delivery, the risk of HIV acquisition in newborns is <1%.[2] In the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (PACTG) 076 study, ZDV alone reduced the incidence of HIV transmission by 66%, and ZDV is recommended as prophylaxis for neonates when maternal ART resulted in consistent viral suppression during pregnancy.[40] Other studies have also compared NVP to ZDV infant prophylaxis.[41,42] The ANRS French Perinatal Cohort observed that NVP infant prophylaxis was associated with less anemia than ZDV infant prophylaxis. The optimal minimum duration of neonatal ZDV prophylaxis has not been established in clinical trials. A 6-week ZDV regimen was studied in newborns in PACTG 076.[43] However, evidence supporting a reduced duration of ZDV prophylaxis in infants born to mothers who were suppressed virologically during pregnancy and at the time of delivery is mounting.[44-46]

No studies directly compare the efficacy of a 2-week versus 4-week duration of infant ZDV prophylaxis. However, high-income countries have some experience with a 2-week duration of infant prophylaxis. The United States, as well as the United Kingdom and other European countries, recommends a 2-week neonatal ZDV prophylaxis regimen when the risk of HIV acquisition from exposure is low and/or very low, with varying criteria across countries.[47,48] Compared with the

6-week ZDV regimen, a 2 to 4 week ZDV regimen has been reported to allow earlier recovery from anemia in otherwise healthy newborns.[49,50] In a cohort of 87 Swiss infants born to women with HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL in the last trimester who did not receive ARV prophylaxis, in accordance with Swiss ARV guidance at that time, none acquired HIV infection.[51]

Other Clinical Scenarios

An infant perinatally exposed to **HIV RNA levels ≥50 copies/mL after 20 weeks of gestation but HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL for the 4 weeks prior to delivery** is considered to have low-to-moderate risk for *in utero* and low risk for intrapartum acquisition of HIV (see Table 12). This assessment takes into consideration that low-level viremia could reflect intermittent adherence between laboratory tests. Low-level viremia (e.g., ≥50 copies/mL to 200 copies/mL) is not expected to confer a high risk of *in utero* transmission of HIV but has been associated with elevated risk of subsequent virologic failure.[52,53] The Panels did not reach consensus on infant ARV management (see Table 13) for this clinical scenario and consider factors such as the magnitude and duration of elevated HIV RNA levels,[2] maternal adherence to ART, and parental input in decision-making.

Some Panel members recommend that these infants receive presumptive HIV therapy until the results of birth HIV NAT are available. If the birth HIV NAT is negative, excluding *in utero* HIV acquisition, the Panels recommend de-escalation of presumptive HIV therapy to ZDV prophylaxis to complete ZDV for a total of 6 weeks. This provides a balanced risk/benefit approach to quickly identifying *in utero* HIV acquisition, limiting exposure to presumptive HIV therapy in the event HIV transmission has not occurred *in utero*, and promptly administering very early presumptive therapy in the event of *in utero* infection. Very early ART has been shown to provide durable virologic suppression and reduce early viral reservoirs enabling HIV remission in some children with *in utero* HIV acquisition.[31,54] See When to Initiate Antiretroviral Therapy in Children With HIV Infection. However, other Panel members argue that the data supporting the potential benefit of early ART has not been demonstrated for this specific scenario, would likely apply to a small number of infants, and carries risk of avoidable toxicity to infants without *in utero* infection; for these reasons, they recommend 2 to 6 weeks of ZDV prophylaxis. Providers must decide which rationale aligns with their own assessment and should consider involving parents in the decision.

When **early (acute or recent) HIV is diagnosed during pregnancy,** infant ARVs should be managed according to the gestational timing of maternal viremia (see Table 13). Because HIV RNA levels are generally very high in these situations, some Panel members would manage all infants with a three-drug ARV regimen even with undetectable maternal viral load after 20 weeks. Other Panel members would base decisions about infant ARVs on the timing of viremia.

When there is a **positive maternal HIV test at delivery or postpartum or infants have a positive HIV antibody test after birth,** infants should receive a three-drug regimen as described above for infants at high risk of HIV acquisition. If supplemental testing confirms a negative maternal HIV status, infant ARV drugs should be discontinued immediately.

Newborns Exposed to Antiretroviral Drug-Resistant Virus

The optimal approach to selecting an ARV regimen for newborns exposed to ARV drug-resistant virus is unknown. Some studies have suggested that ARV drug-resistant virus may have decreased replicative capacity (reduced viral fitness) and transmissibility.[55] The transmission of drug-resistant virus to infants does occur.[56-62] Whether resistant virus increases the risk of vertical HIV acquisition

by the infant remains unclear. A secondary analysis of data from the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development–HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 040/PACTG 1043 did not find that the presence of drug-resistance mutations in mothers who had not received ARV drugs before the start of the study increased the risk of *in utero* or peripartum transmission (adjusted odds ratio 0.8; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.4–1.5).[61] However, a case-control study found that resistance to NNRTIs in the breastfeeding mother was an independent risk factor for the vertical transmission of HIV during breastfeeding in the PROMISE trial.[63]

Although no trials have compared the efficacy of neonatal prophylaxis regimens customized to address maternal drug resistance, the Panels recommend considering maternal drug resistance when selecting the three-drug regimen for presumptive HIV therapy. For example, an infant at high risk of infection perinatally exposed to HIV with NNRTI resistance could potentially benefit from a three-drug regimen based on RAL rather than NVP. However, other factors must also be considered, such as gestational age (limits the number of agents with available dosing) and feasibility for the caregiver to administer the regimen (e.g., the preparation of RAL is more difficult than NVP).

Maraviroc (MVC) has been approved recently for infants ≥2 kg and may provide an additional ARV option for newborns perinatally exposed to multidrug-resistant HIV-1 that remains CCR5-tropic.[64] However, the lack of data about MVC as prophylaxis or treatment in infants and the risk of drug interactions will limit its role for routine use in neonates.

For assistance in selecting a three-drug ARV regimen for newborns perinatally exposed to known or suspected drug resistance, consultation with a pediatric HIV specialist or the National Perinatal HIV hotline (1-888-448-8765) is recommended.

Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Breastfeeding Infants

HIV care should include counseling about infant feeding options (e.g., formula feeding, banked donor human milk, breastfeeding) throughout pregnancy. The conversation should include decision-making about the risk and potential benefits of ARV prophylaxis. Recommendations and dosing for infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding are summarized in Table 14 and Table 14.1. In general, infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding should begin after initial ZDV prophylaxis is completed. However, some experts recommend initiating ARV prophylaxis with NVP or 3TC in place of ZDV from birth for simplicity. The duration of extended infant ARV prophylaxis can also vary based on provider and parent preference. The most conservative course is to continue prophylaxis until 6 weeks after the last exposure to breast milk. However, long-standing maternal virologic suppression may be exhibited during breastfeeding, and with provider's guidance, the decision may be made to stop prophylaxis while continuing to breastfeed. The Panels recommend patient-centered, evidence-based counseling to support shared decision-making about infant feeding. See Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding for more information on counseling, management, and monitoring.

Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Breastfeeding Infants in the Setting of Sustained Virologic Suppression (HIV RNA <50 Copies/mL)

The Panels could not reach consensus on recommendations regarding the use of extended infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding. For infants considered to be at low risk, Panel members agreed on the provision of 2 weeks of ZDV to infants for standard prophylaxis for HIV exposure, but some Panel members prefer to extend the duration of ZDV prophylaxis to 4 to 6 weeks when the

infant is being breastfed. For the period after initial postnatal prophylaxis, some Panel members recommend no additional prophylaxis when virologic suppression is maintained throughout breastfeeding, but other Panel members recommend extended ARV prophylaxis with NVP or 3TC during breastfeeding. Both NVP and 3TC have been used effectively for extended prophylaxis during breastfeeding.[65,66] 3TC has been studied through 12 months of age and requires twice-daily administration.[66] NVP has been studied through 18 months of age and is given once daily.[65] Concerns related to the use of NVP include impaired efficacy in the context of maternal NNRTI and the development of NNRTI resistance if an infant acquires HIV while receiving NVP during breastfeeding (see Newborns Exposed to Antiretroviral Drug-Resistant Virus above).

When extended prophylaxis is used, most experts recommend transitioning to NVP or lamivudine 3TC after completion of the initial ZDV prophylaxis. However, NVP can be given from birth, replacing ZDV and providing both initial postnatal prophylaxis and extended prophylaxis during breastfeeding. ZDV should not be used for a period of more than 6 weeks.

Given the lack of consensus by the Panels for a recommendation about extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding, **the Panels advise providers to involve the parent(s) in open discussion and shared decision-making,** weighing values about risk tolerance (for transmission and toxicity) and other issues related to infant prophylaxis (e.g., prematurity). For additional information, see Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs Used for Infant Prophylaxis below.

Most data to guide decisions about infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding are from studies in sub-Saharan Africa, where breastfeeding is recommended for all pregnancies impacted by HIV infection and standard practice for prophylaxis also differs. The WHO recommends six weeks of NVP for all infants who are breastfed when maternal ART is being received in resource-limited countries.[67] In the PROMISE study, among 1,219 infants of mothers on ART, there were seven HIV transmissions reported. Among these, five mothers had documented detectable viral loads immediately prior to the first report of the infant's positive HIV NAT; the remaining two mothers had elevated viral loads in subsequent testing.[68] Note that these two infants had their first detectable HIV NAT at weeks 13 and 38 of life, beyond 6 weeks of age where infant NVP was administered according to WHO guidelines.

In the Breastfeeding, Antiretrovirals, and Nutrition study, a sub-study of 31 infants with HIV and 232 infants who were uninfected and their mothers[69] demonstrated that there were no HIV transmissions when the mother consistently maintained a viral load less than 100 copies/mL. Bispo et al. have reported a meta-analysis of 11 studies of breastfeeding mothers with HIV who started ART before or during pregnancy and continued until at least 6 months postnatally.[70] This meta-analysis was limited by the heterogeneity in studies but reported an overall postnatal HIV transmission rate of 1.08% (95% CI, 0.32–1.85) at 6 months in infants who tested HIV negative at 4 to 6 weeks of age. In a *post-hoc* analysis of the HPTN 046 study, which showed <1% risk of postnatal HIV transmission in both the extended NVP and placebo arms, the addition of infant prophylaxis did not further reduce breastfeeding transmission in mothers who were receiving ART.[71]

See ARV Prophylaxis for Infants When There Is a Concern About Risk of Future Viremia During Breastfeeding, below, for additional data supporting the efficacy of NVP and 3TC as prophylaxis during breastfeeding.

Taken together, existing data support the efficacy of maternal ART during breastfeeding with documented sustained viral suppression to prevent postnatal transmission of HIV, suggesting

that the recommended management of 2 weeks of ZDV prophylaxis for infants at low risk of *in utero* or intrapartum exposure is appropriate for breastfed infants when sustained maternal HIV RNA levels of <50 copies/mL have been achieved. This approach is currently recommended by the British HIV Association (BHIVA).[47]

Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding

Maternal HIV RNA levels should be monitored periodically during breastfeeding because the status of viral suppression can change over time (see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). Decisions about infant antiretroviral (ARV) management during breastfeeding should be based on clinical assessment and incorporate shared decision-making when indicated.

Providers with questions about ARV management of infants should consult an expert in pediatric HIV infection or the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

Level of Transmission Risk During Breastfeeding by Maternal HIV RNA Levels	Description	Infant ARV Management During Breastfeeding[a]
Sustained Viral Suppression (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL)	When sustained maternal virologic suppression during pregnancy (at a minimum during the third trimester has been achieved, documented by at least two HIV RNA measurements below the limits of detection at least 1 month apart) and breastfeeding and there are no concerns about adherence	• After completion of 2-week ZDV prophylaxis in infants at low risk of *in utero* or intrapartum transmission, some Panel members recommend no additional ARV prophylaxis, but others recommend extended prophylaxis with NVP or 3TC during breastfeeding. The Panels did not reach consensus about the use of extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding (see Table 14.1). • Most Panel members recommend that, if used, extended ARV prophylaxis should be continued until 6 weeks after last exposure to breast milk. However, it may be reasonable to discontinue prophylaxis earlier when concern for maternal viremia is low.
Current HIV RNA Levels <50 copies/mL But Concerns About Future Risk	When maternal virologic suppression has been achieved during pregnancy but there is concern about future risk (e.g., ART adherence or loss of virologic suppression for other reasons) during breastfeeding	• Consider extended ARV prophylaxis with NVP or 3TC (see Table 14.1). • Recommended duration is until 6 weeks after last exposure to breast milk. Providers and parents may consider cessation earlier if concerns about future risk for viremia have resolved. • Provide added adherence support as indicated.

Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding

Level of Transmission Risk During Breastfeeding by Maternal HIV RNA Levels	Description	Infant ARV Management During Breastfeeding[a]
New Viremia During Breastfeeding (HIV RNA **≥200 copies/mL**)	When maternal viremia with HIV RNA ≥200 copies/mL develops or presumed viremia (e.g., nonadherence, interrupted access to ARVs)	• Breastfeeding should be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated (see Situations to Consider Modifying or Stopping Breastfeeding in Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding if HIV RNA ≥200 copies/mL, but some support resuming breastfeeding once re-suppressed. • Perform infant HIV NAT.[a] • Initiate presumptive HIV therapy using three-drug regimen of ZDV, 3TC, and DTG.[b] For infants aged <4 weeks, ZDV and 3TC plus NVP (treatment dose) or RAL should be used. See Table 14.1 for dosing information. • Duration of 2–6 weeks; consensus was not reached by Panel members. • If the duration of the three-drug regimen is <6 weeks, and the NAT is negative, continue ZDV alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis.
New Viremia During Breastfeeding (HIV RNA <200 copies/mL)	The Panels did not reach consensus about neonatal management when maternal viremia develops that is quantifiable but <200 copies/mL.	• Breastfeeding should be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated (see Situations to Consider Modifying or Stopping Breastfeeding in Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). • Perform infant HIV NAT.[a] • Some Panel members recommend initiation of presumptive ARV therapy (as described for new viremia ≥200 copies/mL, above); other Panel members recommend initiation of single-drug ARV prophylaxis (see Table 14.1). • Some Panel members recommend management based on repeat HIV RNA testing. • Consultation with an expert is suggested.

Table 14. Antiretroviral Management of Infants With Exposure to HIV During Breastfeeding

Level of Transmission Risk During Breastfeeding by Maternal HIV RNA Levels	Description	Infant ARV Management During Breastfeeding[a]
New Diagnosis of HIV When Breastfeeding	Newly diagnosed maternal HIV while breastfeeding infant	• Stop breastfeeding and initiate replacement feeding. • Perform infant HIV NAT.[a] • Initiate presumptive HIV therapy using three-drug regimen of ZDV, 3TC, and DTG.[b] For infants aged <4 weeks, ZDV and 3TC plus NVP (treatment dose) or RAL should be used. See Table 14.1 for dosing information. • Duration of 2 to 6 weeks; consensus was not reached by Panel members. • If the duration of three-drug regimen is <6 weeks and the NAT is negative, continue ZDV alone to complete a total of 6 weeks of prophylaxis.

[a] An HIV NAT at birth is recommended for all breastfeeding infants. A NAT should be obtained before or immediately after starting ARVs. See Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children for additional information about infant NATs during breastfeeding and follow-up testing after maternal viremia.

[b] DTG, a second-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitor with a higher barrier to resistance than RAL, can be used in infants aged ≥4 weeks and weighing ≥3 kg.

Note: Given limited data, decisions about infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding should be based on shared decision-making with the infant's parents.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; DTG = dolutegravir; NAT = nucleic acid test; NVP = nevirapine; the Panels = Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission and Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV; RAL = raltegravir; ZDV = zidovudine

Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed

ARV Prophylaxis for Infants When Maternal Sustained Viral Suppression is Achieved	
Recommended Regimen	Recommended Duration and Dosing
ZDV	ZDV administered for 2 weeks after birth (see Table 13.1 for dosing)
Options for Extended Postnatal Prophylaxis[a]	
Recommended Regimen	Recommended Duration and Dosing
ZDV	ZDV administration continued for 4–6 weeks after birth (See Table 13.1 for dosing; note that ZDV is not recommended for prophylaxis beyond this initial postnatal period.)

Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed

<table>
<tr><td>NVP[b,c]</td><td>NVP administered starting at birth or after completion of initial prophylaxis ZDV, through 6 weeks after cessation of breastfeeding

Simplified Age-Based NVP Dosing for Newborns ≥32 Weeks' Gestation Receiving Extended NVP Prophylaxis During Breastfeeding[b,c]
<table><tr><th>Age</th><th>Dose and Volume of NVP 10 mg/mL Oral Syrup Administered Once Daily</th></tr><tr><td>Birth to 6 weeks</td><td>2.0 to < 3.0 kg: 10 mg (1.0 mL)
≥ 3.0 kg: 15 mg (1.5 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>6 weeks to 6 months</td><td>20 mg (2.0 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>6 months to 9 months</td><td>30 mg (3.0 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>9 months to 18 months</td><td>40 mg 4.0 mL</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>3TC</td><td>3TC administered starting after completion of initial prophylaxis ZDV, through 6 weeks after cessation of breastfeeding

Age 2 Weeks to <4 Weeks
• 3TC 2 mg/kg per dose orally twice daily

Age ≥4 Weeks to 12 months
• Use simplified weight-band dosing outlined in the table below.

Simplified Weight-Band Dosing for 3TC (10 mg/ml Solution) When Used as Prophylaxis During Breastfeeding[d]
<table><tr><th>Weight Band</th><th>Dose and Volume of 3TC 10 mg/mL Oral Solution Administered Twice Daily</th></tr><tr><td>2 to < 3 kg</td><td>10 mg (1 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>3 kg to <4 kg</td><td>15 mg (1.5 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>4 kg to <8 kg</td><td>25 mg (2.5 mL)</td></tr><tr><td>≥8 kg</td><td>50 mg (5 mL)</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Recommended Infant ARV Management When Maternal Viremia Develops or HIV is Diagnosed During Breastfeeding[a]</th></tr>
<tr><th>Presumptive HIV Therapy Regimens</th><th>Recommended Duration and Dosing</th></tr>
<tr><td>ZDV plus 3TC plus DTG[e]</td><td>Three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen. ZDV and 3TC plus NVP or RAL should be used in place of DTG for infants aged <4 weeks and/or weighing <3 kg.[e,f] See Table 13.1 for dosing of ZDV and 3TC in infants aged <6 weeks. Refer to drug sections in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for appropriate age-based dosing of DTG and for dosing of ZDV, 3TC, NVP, or RAL in infants aged >6 weeks.</td></tr>
</table>

Table 14.1. Antiretroviral Prophylaxis Dosing for Infants Who Are Breastfed

	Presumptive HIV therapy is recommended for a duration of 2–6 weeks (see Table 14).

[a] Consultation and referrals to local or regional Pediatric HIV specialists are available through the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

[b] NVP dosing is adapted from the Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery and Monitoring: Recommendations for a Public Health Approach. For infants at low risk of transmission, these doses can be given from birth. (Simplified Age-Based Dosing for Newborns ≥32 Weeks' Gestation Receiving Extended NVP Prophylaxis During Breastfeeding in the World Health Organization's Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery and Monitoring: Recommendations for a Public Health Approach, July 2021)

[c] 3TC should be used as extended ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding when there is evidence or concern for maternal NVP resistant virus (including HIV-2 infection or HIV-1/HIV-2 co-infection) or when an infant cannot tolerate NVP. Dosing recommendations for 3TC are included in the table.

[d] Dosing for extended 3TC prophylaxis during breastfeeding, based on established 3TC dosing for treatment and weight-band dosing used in PROMISE-EPI Source: Mennecier A, Kankasa C, et al. Optimised prevention of postnatal HIV transmission in Zambia and Burkina Faso (PROMISE-EPI): a phase 3, open-label, randomised controlled trial. *Lancet*. 2024;403(10434):1362-1371. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38484756.

[e] DTG, a second-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitor with a higher barrier to resistance than RAL, is preferred in infants aged ≥4 weeks and weighing ≥3 kg.

[f] When maternal HIV infection is diagnosed while breastfeeding, a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen is recommended for the infant, with a duration of 2–6 weeks (see Table 14.1). The same regimen is recommended for infants at high risk of HIV acquisition after *in utero* or intrapartum exposure (see Table 13 and Table 13.1). No trials have evaluated the use of multidrug regimens to prevent transmission after cessation of breastfeeding with early (acute or recent) HIV infection. Some Panel members recommend presumptive HIV therapy until the infant's HIV status can be determined. If the infant's initial HIV NAT is negative, the optimal duration of presumptive HIV therapy is unknown. A 28-day course may be reasonable based on current recommendations for nonoccupational HIV exposure.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ARV = antiretroviral; NVP = nevirapine; RAL = raltegravir; ZDV = zidovudine

Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Infants When There Is Concern About the Risk of Future Viremia During Breastfeeding

When there is an interest in breastfeeding and the criteria for the lowest anticipated risk of breast milk transmission is met, with current and recent HIV RNA levels of <50 copies/mL, there may be concern about future adherence in the postpartum period or factors that may impact virologic suppression (e.g., postpartum depression, interrupted access to ARVs).[72] Lapses in adherence in the postpartum period are common, with increased risk among women of younger age and more recent ART initiation.[73] Providers may consider additional adherence history and postpartum adherence challenges following prior pregnancies when making recommendations about infant prophylaxis during breastfeeding. There may be anticipated changes in social structure, such as moving to a new home, in the postpartum period that may generate new challenges to adherence. It is also important for providers to elicit parents' concerns, regardless of the provider's assessment. If there are concerns about ARV adherence during breastfeeding, the Panels recommend extended infant ARV prophylaxis during breastfeeding with either NVP or 3TC and the addition of maternal adherence support (see Table 14 and Table 14.1).

Data suggest that infant prophylaxis can be very effective in preventing breast milk transmission in the context of maternal viremia. In the PROMISE trial, only 7 of the 1,211 (0.58%) analyzed infants in the infant NVP prophylaxis arm acquired HIV infection.[68] A randomized controlled trial in Burkina Faso and Zambia found that initiation of same day infant 3TC prophylaxis in women with a

viral load of >1,000 copies/mL during breastfeeding resulted in a reduction in postnatal HIV transmission compared to local standard of care.[66] Although findings did not reach statistical significance because the study was underpowered, the findings suggest that early infant diagnosis, in conjunction with on-demand HIV RNA testing in the breastfeeding mother and extended infant prophylaxis, could be a valuable approach in eliminating postnatal HIV transmission risk. A pooled analysis of these trials reported that mothers with a viral load of 40 to 1,000 copies/mL in the initial 6 to 8 weeks postpartum were at high risk for having a viral load >1,000 copies/mL at 6 or 12 months postpartum.[74] Given the efficacy demonstrated in the trials, the Panels believe that extended ARV prophylaxis should be considered for breastfeeding infants when there is concern about future risk of HIV exposure during episodes of maternal viremia.

Antiretroviral Prophylaxis for Infants Exposed to Detectable HIV RNA During Breastfeeding

Parents should receive counseling and be involved in decision-making about infant ARV prophylaxis and management of infant feeding. In situations where there is increased risk of postnatal transmission due to the development/occurrence of viremia during breastfeeding, the Panels advise initiation of additional infant ARV prophylaxis to prevent breastfeeding-associated HIV transmission. When detectable maternal HIV RNA levels develop during breastfeeding, the infant should be tested for HIV infection (using a NAT) prior to or immediately after initiating ARVs, as well as at specified time points after cessation of breastfeeding and completion of presumptive HIV therapy (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and Table 3. Recommended Virologic Testing Schedule for Infants With Perinatal and Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). If infant HIV testing returns a positive HIV NAT result, see Infants with HIV Infection below and What to Start in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines).

When new maternal viremia develops, the Panels recommend that breastfeeding be stopped temporarily or discontinued and replacement feeding initiated (see Situations to Consider Modifying or Stopping Breastfeeding in Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). Most experts recommend permanent discontinuation of breastfeeding when HIV RNA is ≥200 copies/mL. This guidance is more directive than counseling when suppressive ART is being taken. In situations where viremia is lower and an addressable cause has been identified, the added risk of short term continued breastfeeding would be less.

Management of New Maternal Viremia With HIV RNA ≥200 Copies/mL While Breastfeeding

In cases where new maternal viremia with an HIV RNA level ≥200 copies/mL occurs while breastfeeding, the Panels recommend immediate initiation of infant presumptive HIV therapy using a three-drug regimen of ZDV plus 3TC plus DTG (NVP or RAL in place of DTG, if infant age < 4 weeks) (see Table 14 and Table 14.1 above). The drugs should be administered together for 2 to 6 weeks, with duration based on timing of results of infant NAT. As for management of high risk around the time of birth, if 3TC plus (DTG or NVP or RAL) are discontinued, ZDV should be continued alone to complete a total of 6 weeks prophylaxis.

As noted above, in cases where new maternal viremia with an HIV RNA level ≥200 copies/mL develops while breastfeeding, the Panels recommend permanent cessation of breastfeeding. However, the decision may be made to continue to breastfeed in which case longer durations of

ARVs for infants may be indicated. Discussion with parents and consultation with the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765) or consultation with another expert is suggested.

Management of New Maternal Viremia With HIV RNA <200 Copies/mL While Breastfeeding

In cases where new maternal viremia that is quantifiable but with HIV RNA <200 copies/mL occurs while breastfeeding, some Panel members recommend initiation of presumptive HIV therapy for the infant, other Panel members recommend initiation of single-drug ARV prophylaxis (with NVP or 3TC), and other Panel members recommend infant ARV management based on repeat maternal HIV RNA testing. The rationale for the cutoff of 200 copies/mL is that low-level viremia <200 copies/mL has been shown to predict future virologic failure with HIV RNA >200 copies/mL.[75] The Panels did not reach consensus about infant ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy in this situation (see Table 14). Discussion with parents and consultation with the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765) or consultation with another expert is suggested.

Special Situations in Breastfeeding Infants

Initiation or Continuation of Breastfeeding With Viremia

The Panels strongly advise against initiating or continuing breastfeeding infants at high risk of HIV acquisition from *in utero,* intrapartum, and/or postnatal exposure. Replacement feeding with formula or banked pasteurized donor human milk is recommended given the high risk of postnatal HIV transmission associated with viremia during breastfeeding (see Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding). Discussion with parents and consultation with the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765) or consultation with another expert is recommended.

Infants Exposed to Newly Diagnosed Maternal HIV While Breastfeeding

When maternal HIV is suspected (e.g., a positive initial screening test), breastfeeding should be discontinued immediately, until HIV is ruled out. Pumping and temporarily discarding or freezing breast milk can be recommended when maternal HIV while breastfeeding is suspected but HIV serostatus is not yet confirmed and continuation of breastfeeding is desired. If HIV is ruled out, breastfeeding can resume. Given the high risk of HIV transmission when HIV is acquired or diagnosed during breastfeeding, the Panels advise against breastfeeding and recommend replacement feeding with formula or banked pasteurized donor human milk if maternal HIV infection is confirmed while breastfeeding.[76] See New HIV Diagnosis While Breastfeeding in Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children for guidance about infant testing.

Breastfed infants exposed to newly diagnosed maternal HIV diagnosis during breastfeeding are considered to be at high risk of HIV acquisition and treated accordingly with a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen for 2 to 6 weeks (see Table 14 and Table 14.1). No trials have evaluated the use of multidrug regimens to prevent transmission after cessation of breastfeeding by a parent with early (acute or recent) HIV infection. Given the higher risk of postnatal transmission from early (acute or recent) HIV infection while breastfeeding, an alternative approach favored by some Panel members is to offer presumptive HIV therapy until the infant's HIV status can be determined. If the infant's initial HIV NAT is negative, the optimal duration of presumptive HIV therapy is unknown. A 28-day course may be reasonable based on current recommendations for nonoccupational HIV exposure. The National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765) can provide

referrals to local or regional pediatric HIV specialists.

Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs Used for Infant Prophylaxis

This section is intended to provide the information needed for clinical management and counseling parents on decision-making around infant prophylaxis. When used alone for prophylaxis in low-risk scenarios during the neonatal period and breastfeeding, ARVs appear highly safe. The most prominent toxicity in the neonatal period is anemia from ZDV given alone or in combination regimens; anemia occurs after 2–4 weeks but recovers with the cessation of treatment to levels similar to controls (see Initial Postnatal Management of the Neonate Exposed to HIV). During the breastfeeding period, 3TC has been shown to be safe through at least 41 weeks. NVP has been shown to be safe for infants from birth through 18 months of life; one trial identified cases with concerns of a hypersensitivity reaction, but larger subsequent trials did not report hypersensitivity reactions. Three-drug combinations appear safe within the durations currently recommended (i.e., 2–6 weeks).

Based on existing safety data, longitudinal laboratory monitoring for adverse events is not needed in otherwise healthy infants receiving currently recommended ARVs used for prophylaxis in the first 6 weeks of life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends periodic monitoring of hematologic and liver toxicity in breastfeeding infants receiving ARV prophylaxis beyond this period and for extended durations.[77]

Zidovudine

ZDV was the first agent studied for prophylaxis against HIV transmission to infants and remains the standard of care for prophylaxis in low-risk situations. The major side effect from short-term (6 weeks or less) use of ZDV appears to be transient anemia.

- In the landmark PACTG 076 trial, 415 infants were randomized and received ZDV or placebo; hemoglobin levels in the ZDV arm were lower at the end of the 6-week treatment course but recovered and were equivalent between arms by 12 weeks.[43] No other toxicities were significantly different between arms, and no new toxicities were identified through 18 months of follow up.[78]
- Subsequent trials of 6-week regimens of ZDV alone did not identify other significant toxicities.[20]
- A 4-week ZDV regimen, compared with the 6-week ZDV regimen, has been reported to result in earlier recovery from anemia in infants who are HIV-exposed but otherwise healthy.[49] Severe cases of anemia can be treated with erythropoietin[79]; substitution of ZDV with 3TC and/or NVP[41] can also be considered.

Lamivudine

3TC has been extensively studied in combination with ZDV, but data primarily from two trials support the safety of 3TC used alone as prophylaxis during breastfeeding through at least 41 weeks of life.

- The Mitra Study was an open-label single-arm prospective cohort trial in which 398 infants were treated with ZDV + 3TC from birth to 1 week of age, and then with 3TC alone for the duration of breastfeeding (maximum of 6 months) plus 2 weeks after stopping breastfeeding.[80] No serious adverse events were attributed to the study drug.

- In ANRS 12174, 1,273 infants were randomized at 7 days to receive either lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) or 3TC through the completion of breastfeeding (median duration 41 weeks)[81]; there were no differences in adverse events rates between the arms.
- In ANRS 12397 PROMISE-EPI, in infants breastfed by mothers with HIV who were viremic during pregnancy, 3TC was initiated as prophylaxis at 6 weeks and 6 months, and continued through 12 months of age; the initial report noted no safety concerns, but the full results have not yet been published.[82,83]

Nevirapine

Several trials support the safety of once-daily NVP in the first 6 weeks of life and through breastfeeding. Although reactions concerning hypersensitivity were reported in the Breastfeeding, Antiretrovirals, and Nutrition (BAN) trial, no cases have been identified in subsequent large trials or from clinical programs. Strong data also support the safety of twice-daily NVP used in a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy regimen.

- In the SWEN trial, infants were randomized to either single dose (n = 1,047) or 6-week courses (n = 977) of once-daily NVP; adverse events were common overall (~40%) but without significant differences by arm.[81]
- In the BAN trial, 2,369 mother-infant dyads were randomized to infant prophylaxis with once-daily NVP, maternal ARV treatment, or enhanced control until the cessation of breastfeeding but no longer than 28 weeks.[84] A hypersensitivity reaction (rash, with eosinophilia in 10 infants, with or without fever) developed in 16 (1.9%) infants within 4 weeks after the initiation of NVP therapy; reactions resolved after NVP was replaced with 3TC. Hypersensitivity was the only adverse event significantly different between arms.
- In HPTN 046, 1,519 breastfeeding infants were randomized to 6 months of once-daily NVP or placebo (after 6 weeks of NVP from birth); no differences in adverse event rates were noted by arm through 12 months of follow up.[81]
- In the PEPI-Malawi trial, 3,016 infants were randomized to receive NVP with 1 week of ZDV (control), once daily NVP extended through 14 weeks, or NVP + ZDV extended through 14 weeks.[85] Among the three arms, no significant differences were seen in serious adverse event rates overall, nor among adverse events deemed probably associated with study drugs. However, the extended NVP + ZDV arm had significantly more serious adverse events deemed possibly related to NVP or ZDV, the most common of which was neutropenia.
- In IMPAACT 1077BF, the breastfeeding component of the PROMISE trial, 2,431 mother-infant dyads were randomized to either maternal ART or infant NVP prophylaxis (once daily) continued until 18 months after delivery or breastfeeding cessation[65]; the median duration of breastfeeding was 16 months in both arms. No differences were seen between study arms in Grade 3 or 4 adverse event rates or liver or skin toxicity. Of the 1,204 infants in the NVP arm who started on the study-recommended regimen, only 20 (2%) stopped the recommended regimen because of concerns of toxicity, and no cases of hypersensitivity were reported.
- The French Perinatal Cohort observed less frequent Grade 2 or higher anemia in 830 infants receiving once-daily NVP versus ZDV prophylaxis in a high-resource setting.[41]
- In IMPAACT P1115, infants at high risk of HIV acquisition were given NVP twice daily as part of a three-drug presumptive HIV therapy approach; NVP was dosed as 6 mg/kg twice daily for

term neonates (≥37 weeks gestational age) or 4 mg/kg twice daily for 1 week and 6 mg/kg twice daily thereafter for preterm neonates (34 to <37 weeks gestational age).[21] Among 438 neonates enrolled, 389 (89%) were born at term; 36 were subsequently found to have *in utero* HIV infection. Division of AIDS (DAIDS) Grade 3 or 4 adverse events that were classified as at least possibly related to ARVs were reported in 30 infants (7%; 95% CI, 5–10) but did not lead to cessation of NVP in any cases; neutropenia (25 neonates [6%]) and anemia (six neonates [1%]) were the most commonly reported toxicities.

Abacavir

Data on the use of ABC in HIV-exposed neonates are limited, but suggest it is well tolerated. In a metanalysis and population PK model that included data from three separate PK trials with a total of 45 infants aged <3 months and born to women with HIV, no adverse events of Grade 3 or greater were attributed to ABC.[86] At this time, the Panels suggest using ABC in neonates as an alternative to ZDV in rare situations and only after negative HLA-B*5701 allele testing.

Raltegravir

The primary toxicity of concern with the use of RAL in the neonatal period has been the potential increase in bilirubin levels, but at recommended dosing, RAL appears safe. RAL is metabolized by uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase (UGT) 1A1, the same enzyme responsible for the elimination of bilirubin; UGT enzyme activity is low at birth, and RAL elimination is prolonged in neonates. In addition, RAL binds to albumin, raising concern that the displacement of bilirubin could lead to hyperbilirubinemia. However, *in vitro* studies suggested RAL would be safe at the drug exposures achieved for treatment.[87] IMPAACT P1110, the single-arm regulatory Phase 1/2 trial that established dosing for RAL, evaluated safety in 52 infants of 34 weeks gestational age and older; no adverse events were attributed to RAL, and no bilirubin levels exceeded 16 mg/dL.[88]

Combination ARV Regimens

Combination ARV regimens are associated with elevated risk of toxicity compared to single agents, but the three-drug regimens currently recommended for presumptive HIV therapy in neonates (e.g., NVP/ZDV/3TC or RAL/ZDV/3TC) appear very safe when used for 6 or fewer weeks. Early studies of two and three-drug regimens used as prophylaxis suggested that hematologic and mitochondrial toxicity is more common than with exposure to a single NRTI.[89-93] However, more recent studies provide data about the safety of the ARV regimen that is currently recommended for presumptive HIV therapy, suggesting it is generally well tolerated, but does confer an increased risk of anemia.

- In IMPAACT P1115, 438 infants of at least 34 weeks gestational age at high risk of HIV acquisition initiated NVP plus 2 NRTIs (ZDV + 3TC in 96%) within 48 hours of life and continued until *in utero* infection was excluded by HIV DNA testing at birth (a median of 13 days).[21] Grade 3 or 4 adverse events at least possibly related to ARVs occurred in 30 (7%) of 438 infants, with neutropenia (25 [6%]) and anemia (6 [1%]) being the most common. Toxicity led to the permanent discontinuation of ZDV in nine (2%) of 438 participants (four found to have *in utero* HIV, and five without) with neutropenia and anemia being the primary reasons for discontinuation; no other ARVs were permanently discontinued because of toxicity.

- A prospective cohort study in Thailand reported a greater proportion of infants receiving ZDV/3TC/NVP for 6 weeks experienced Grade 2 anemia (38%) at 1 month compared to infants receiving ZDV alone (21%, $P = 0.007$).[94] However, the risk of Grade 3 anemia was lower and similar between arms at 9.2% versus 10.2%, respectively ($P = 0.81$). Hemoglobin levels recovered by 2 months, at which time there was no difference between the arms. No differences in neutropenia or hepatotoxicity between the groups were observed.
- A retrospective study described outcomes of 148 Canadian infants at high risk of HIV transmission treated with three drugs for 6 weeks including ARV based on NVP (40%), nelfinavir (50%), and LPV/r (5%); all together, infants receiving combination regimens had lower hemoglobin levels than infants who received ZDV alone over 6 months, but no difference was seen between the subgroup receiving NVP-based treatment compared to ZDV alone.[32]

Generalizability of Available Safety Data

A number of considerations affect the generalizability of the safety data reviewed here to current patient populations.

- The majority of trials included were completed at a time when mothers of infants receiving prophylaxis were not receiving ART. It is possible that ARVs passed through breast milk could add to toxicity in infants also receiving prophylaxis during breastfeeding. Current data suggest that only clinically insignificant, small amounts of approved ARVs enter the breast milk, but this hypothetical possibility must be considered for new agents. See Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs During Breastfeeding in Preventing HIV Transmission During Infant Feeding for more details.
- This section focused on the risk of severe (Grade 3 or 4) adverse events; most trials did not report the frequencies of lower-grade toxicities. Please see the DAIDS reference tables for more information.[95]
- The overall rate of adverse events was high in many of the trials. For example, in IMPAACT 1077BF, approximately 35% of infants in both arms experienced Grade 3 adverse events or death, a rate much higher than experienced in settings with more health care resources.[65] The high rate of events unrelated to study drugs overall may reflect the limited health care resources in the settings in sub-Saharan Africa. However, some data suggest that the normal value ranges developed in the United States may not be applicable in other settings or countries.[96,97] As a result, it is difficult to extrapolate the individual risk of events for an infant in settings that differ from the trials. However, the possibility of an added risk of adverse events from agents can still be evaluated by comparing arms in randomized trials.
- This section focuses on agents and approaches that are currently recommended. Safety data about approaches that are no longer recommended (e.g., NVP plus ZDV) can be found in archived guidelines.
- Additional information about ARV toxicity can be found in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines (see Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information); however, data summarized there are generally from clinical trials and other studies of children with HIV, in whom the coadministration of other ARVs and comorbidities may also have contributed to toxicity.

Infants With HIV Infection

When infant HIV testing returns a positive HIV NAT result, the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines recommend rapid initiation of ART (defined as initiating ART immediately or within days of HIV diagnosis) without waiting for a confirmatory test, given the low likelihood of a false-positive HIV NAT (see When to Initiate Antiretroviral Treatment in Children with HIV Infection and Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children). ART should be discontinued if subsequent negative NAT testing excludes the presence of HIV infection. What to Start in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines provides recommendations about initial ART for infants and children with HIV, including those who are receiving presumptive HIV therapy or other ARV prophylaxis at the time of diagnosis.

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Special Considerations for Antiretroviral Therapy Use in Adolescents With HIV

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Panel's Recommendations
• All adolescents with HIV should receive maximally suppressive antiretroviral therapy (ART); this is urgent for those who are sexually active, considering pregnancy, or pregnant (AII). • ART regimen selection should include consideration of the adolescent's individual needs and preferences (AIII). See What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV and Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy for more information. • All adolescents with HIV should be screened for mental health and substance use disorders (AII). • Reproductive and sexual health issues—including pregnancy intentions, contraceptive methods, safer sex techniques to prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), regular STI screening, pre-exposure prophylaxis for partners, pregnancy planning, and preconception care—should be discussed regularly (AII). • Adolescents with HIV can use all available hormonal contraceptive methods (e.g., pill, patch, ring, injection, implant); however, providers should consider potential drug–drug interactions between hormonal contraceptives and antiretroviral medications that could affect contraceptive efficacy (AII*). See Table 3. Drug Interactions Between Antiretroviral Agents and Hormonal Contraceptives in the Perinatal Guidelines. • Pediatric and adolescent care providers should prepare adolescents for the transition into adult care settings (AIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents.*

Background

Most individuals in the United States who acquired HIV through perinatal transmission are now adolescents or young adults. Internationally born adolescents with perinatally acquired HIV (PHIV) now comprise a significant proportion of PHIV living in the United States. Regardless of birthplace, most adolescents with PHIV[1] have had a long clinical course with an extensive antiretroviral (ARV) treatment history.[2,3] Older youth and adults may have initially received nonsuppressive monotherapy or dual therapy prior to the availability of combination ARV regimens, including fixed-dose combination (FDC) formulations. Challenges that affect the treatment of adolescents with PHIV include extensive drug resistance, complex regimens, the long-term consequences of HIV and antiretroviral therapy (ART) exposure,[4] the developmental transition to adulthood, and psychosocial factors.[5-8] With optimal HIV care, including entering care with a CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count over 750 cells/mL, 99% medication adherence, and no loss to follow-up, adolescents with PHIV have similar life expectancy as youth without HIV. However, without ideal HIV care, models project that adolescents with PHIV have life expectancies 10 to 12 years shorter than youth without

HIV, highlighting the importance of specialized care that addresses critical barriers to optimal health outcomes in this population.[9]

In the United States, most adolescents aged ≥14 years who recently received an HIV diagnosis acquired their infection through non-perinatal transmission (NPHIV).[10] They generally follow a clinical course similar to that of adults, and the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines should be consulted for treatment recommendations for these individuals. Additional information that is specific to the care of postpubertal adolescents can be found in Adolescents and Young Adults With HIV.

Timing and Selection of Antiretroviral Therapy

All adolescents with HIV (like all people with HIV) should initiate ART as soon as possible after HIV diagnosis. Recommendations for ART selection in adolescents with sexual maturity ratings (SMRs) between 1 and 3 can be found in What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV and Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information. ART recommendations for adolescents and young adults with SMRs of 4 or 5 are available in the What to Start: Initial Combination Antiretroviral Regimens for People With HIV section of the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines. Optimizing and simplifying treatment, including with approved long-acting injectable ART, may be especially important when treating adolescents because this can help improve adherence (see Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy). Clinicians who are treating adolescents should consider additional factors before initiating ART, including childbearing potential, potential drug interactions with contraception and the safety of using certain ARV drugs before conception or during pregnancy (see the Contraception, Pregnancy, and Antiretroviral Therapy section below).

Dosing of Antiretroviral Therapy for Adolescents With HIV

Clinical providers need to pay attention to the transition of adolescents from pediatric to adult ART dosing. Many ARV drugs (e.g., abacavir, emtricitabine, lamivudine, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate [TDF], some protease inhibitors [PIs]) are administered to children at higher body weight–based doses or body surface area–based doses than would be predicted by direct extrapolation of adult doses. These doses are based on reported pharmacokinetic data that indicate more rapid drug clearance in children than in adults. Therefore, failure to ensure weight-appropriate dosing in adolescents can result in an increased risk of drug toxicity if higher pediatric dosing is not transitioned to lower adult dosing (often between 25 kg and 40 kg, depending on the particular drug).[11]

Adherence Concerns in Adolescents

Low adherence to oral ART is a common problem among adolescents with HIV. Both psychosocial and cognitive developmental factors may contribute to adherence challenges, and these factors should be assessed regularly. Assessment of ARV adherence in adolescents with HIV can be challenging, and discordance between self-report and other adherence measures—such as viral load and therapeutic or cumulative drug levels—should prompt open discussions with the adolescent and their caregiver (see Table 15. Approaches to Monitoring Medication Adherence). In one study conducted in Botswana, adolescents whose self-reported adherence and electronic adherence monitoring were discordant reported reasons for not disclosing nonadherence that included fear of disappointing caregivers and providers and a desire to avoid negative feedback or punitive adherence counseling.[12] Providers should encourage open discussions that normalize the difficulties of taking life-long medications and provide positive reinforcement for disclosing adherence challenges. The

adolescent's individual needs and preferences also should be considered when making decisions about initiating or changing ART. Comprehensive systems of care are required to serve both the medical and psychosocial needs of adolescents with HIV who are frequently inexperienced with managing their health care and may also lack health insurance. Not surprisingly, higher levels of self-reported social support are associated with viral suppression among adolescents with PHIV; thus, social support should be assessed routinely.[13] Disclosure of HIV status has been associated with improved adherence overall, and providers should endeavor to ensure youth receive full disclosure of their HIV status by early adolescence in most cases,[14] with ongoing developmentally appropriate HIV education throughout adolescence.

Adolescents with PHIV infection are at risk for neurocognitive impairment, which also can interfere with medication adherence.[15,16] Many also are at risk for mental health comorbidities, including psychiatric, behavioral, and substance use disorders that may interfere with adherence to ART.[8,17] Compared with adults, youth have lower rates of viral suppression and higher rates of virologic rebound and loss to follow-up.[18,19] For further discussion of interventions to promote adherence in adolescents, see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV, Adolescents and Young Adults With HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines, and a 2013 review by Agwu and Fairlie.[4]

A specific challenge is presented by youth who, despite interventions, remain unable to adhere to therapy. In these cases, simplifying treatment to a once-daily regimen, an FDC tablet, or a long-acting injectable ARV regimen may improve adherence. The first long-acting injectable ARV regimen (cabotegravir and rilpivirine) was approved in 2022 for use in virologically suppressed adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg, with data on use in adolescents now increasing (see Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine).[20-23] Data are emerging on the potential use of long-acting injectable ARVs in adults who experience challenges to daily oral ART[24] or who have known resistance; adolescent-specific studies are underway.[25,26] See Table 16. Strategies to Improve Adherence to Antiretroviral Medications for more information. Alternatives to changing the ARV regimen include, but are not limited to, using cellphone alerts and other mobile health (or mHealth) approaches to remind individuals to take their medication and attend clinic visits,[27] initiating a short-term deferral of treatment until adherence improves or while adherence-related challenges (including mental health and substance use disorders) are aggressively addressed, initiating an adherence testing and training period during which a placebo (e.g., vitamin pill) is administered, scheduling appointments more frequently, employing directly observed therapy, and avoiding regimens with a low genetic resistance threshold (see Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression). Such decisions should be individualized and the person's clinical and laboratory status monitored carefully, integrating transportation support and telemedicine options for flexible care engagement. Even small and short-term improvements in virologic suppression may have longer-term clinical value for adolescents with HIV.[28]

Mental Health and Substance Use Concerns in Adolescents

Adolescent mental distress is a growing concern. Between 2009 and 2019, national youth surveys showed increases in the proportion of youth reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, increases in the proportion of youth seriously considering suicide, and a concurrent rise in suicide rates in youth ages 10 to 24 years.[10,29] During the same period, adolescent use of social media increased exponentially, and potential harmful impacts on youth mental health emerged (see Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2021 and Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2022).

Many factors can increase the risk of adverse mental health outcomes among adolescents with PHIV, including long-term medical treatment for chronic disease, hospitalizations, stigma, the neurocognitive impacts of HIV, parental psychiatric and substance use disorders, and family and caregiver stress and loss. The prevalence of mental health disorders in youth with PHIV is high, with nearly 70% of these adolescents meeting the criteria for a psychiatric disorder at some point in their lives.[8,30-32] The most common conditions include anxiety, behavioral disorders, mood disorders (including depression), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Trauma experience is also high among youth with PHIV and may particularly impact those who are internationally born.[33-35] Additionally, although data are sparse, the prevalence of attempted suicide has been notably higher in adolescents with HIV than in those who have been exposed to HIV but are uninfected.[36] The risk of psychosis and severe chronic mental health disorders has been shown to be higher in adolescents with PHIV than expected in the general young adult population.[37] Effectively managing psychiatric comorbidities can improve an individual's adherence to medical care, including ART, and can lead to better academic performance and interpersonal relationships (see Substance Use Disorders and HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines).[17,38-40]

Interventions that address mental health in youth with PHIV include pharmacologic interventions, behavioral modification, and individual, family, and group counseling. The use of telehealth or counseling via videoconferencing may be feasible and acceptable and may improve access to mental health treatment for adolescents with HIV.[41] Current evidence suggests that a combination of tailored psychotherapy—such as cognitive behavioral therapy—and pharmacotherapy can reduce depressive symptoms in adolescents with HIV; however, clinicians who prescribe pharmacotherapy for depression must take potential interactions with ARV drugs into account (see Drug–Drug Interactions in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines).[42,43] A multicenter study randomized adolescents with HIV with depressive symptoms across 13 U.S. sites to either a cognitive behavioral therapy and medication management algorithm (COMB-R) tailored for adolescents with HIV or enhanced standard of care, including standard psychotherapy and medication management. After 6 months, sites using the COMB-R intervention showed decreased depressive symptoms and higher remission from depression than the enhanced standard of care; however, mean HIV viral load and CD4 count were not significantly different between arms.[44] Another study, conducted among youth with HIV in Uganda, demonstrated significant potential benefit of structured mindfulness and acceptance-based sessions to reduce depression, anxiety, and stigma (all $P < 0.001$).[45] Interest in the adoption of trauma-informed care (TIC) practices for people with HIV is emerging; however, research evaluating TIC interventions is limited, and efficacy is mixed.[46] Providers may consider utilizing TIC principles for youth with PHIV who have experienced trauma.[47]

Evidence exists that adolescents with PHIV are more likely to have substance use disorders than the general population[48]; however, available studies on substance use among adolescents with PHIV show age of initiation and rates of substance use similar to age-matched peers without HIV.[49] In a comparison of 390 youth with perinatal exposure to HIV versus 211 youth with PHIV, investigators from the Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study (PHACS) found that nearly half of both groups had ever used alcohol or marijuana, with a majority having used either substance in the last 3 months, and one of five participants who used marijuana reporting at least daily use.[50] In another study, there was no difference in substance use between adolescents exposed to HIV and adolescents with HIV. While rates of substance use may not be higher in adolescents with PHIV, the impact on health outcomes—including interference with medication adherence, increased risk-taking, and decreased safe sex practices—and the potential for comorbid mental health concerns make addressing substance use in adolescents with HIV an important consideration for HIV care providers.[51,52]

Providers who are caring for adolescents with HIV should incorporate screening for psychiatric disorders (including suicidality), trauma exposure and experiences, and substance use disorders into routine care and refer patients to age-appropriate services as needed. The American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care policy statement provides some guidance and screening tools, particularly for depression. Screening tools for substance use—such as Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) or Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, and Trouble (CRAFFT)—may be used.[53] Providers also should consider emerging substance use trends when screening adolescents with HIV. Further guidance on screening tools for substance use and mental health is provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Screening and Assessment Tools Chart.

Sexually Transmitted Infections in Adolescents

At least half of new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the United States occur in youth aged 15 to 24. An analysis of three Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions studies conducted between 2009 and 2015 identified rates of STIs in adolescents with HIV that were higher than national averages for those without HIV.[54] Although adolescents with either NPHIV or PHIV had elevated rates of STIs, those with NPHIV had higher rates than those with PHIV. In addition, STIs were more frequent during times when viral load was >400 copies/mL. In another study in the United States among mostly Black and Latino adolescents with PHIV, almost 20% reported recent condomless sex, putting them at risk for STIs, unplanned pregnancy, and horizontal HIV transmission.[55] Clinicians should discuss the risk of STIs with their patients. All adolescents with HIV should be screened for STIs and treated appropriately. Clinicians should regularly obtain a detailed sexual history for adolescents to determine which STI screening tests are appropriate. Rates of syphilis have been an ongoing concern in the United States in recent years, particularly in people with HIV and males who have sex with males. Clinicians should be aware of local public health recommendations and ensure regular screening for adolescents with PHIV.[56] Screening for STIs in sexually active adolescents with HIV often requires sampling from several body sites—including the oropharynx, rectum, and urethra—because multiple sites of infection are common.[57] Furthermore, a negative assay at a single site does not preclude the possibility of infection at another site.[58] For a more detailed discussion of STIs, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STI Treatment Guidelines,[59] Human Papillomavirus Disease in the Adult and Adolescent Opportunistic Infection Guidelines, and Human Papillomavirus in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines. All female adolescents with HIV who are sexually active should receive gynecologic services. All adolescents with HIV should receive three doses of the 9-valent human papillomavirus vaccination (see Figure 1. Recommended Immunization Schedule for Children With HIV Infection Aged 0 Through 18 Years in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infections Guidelines. While data are limited in adolescents, consideration should be given for doxycycline postexposure prophylaxis for bacterial STI prevention, as well as mpox vaccination for eligible adolescents with PHIV during outbreaks.[60]

Contraception, Pregnancy, and Antiretroviral Therapy

Adolescents with HIV may initiate sexual activity before or after puberty, but adolescents with PHIV do not appear to initiate sexual activity earlier than adolescents without HIV.[61] Sexually active adolescents are at risk for unintended pregnancy. Approximately half of pregnancies in the United States, including those among women with HIV, are unintended or unplanned.[62,63] Providers should regularly assess adolescents' desires to become pregnant or avoid pregnancy (also known as their pregnancy intentions). Family planning counseling—including a discussion of the risks of sexual HIV transmission, perinatal HIV transmission, and methods for reducing these risks—should be provided to all youth. Reproductive health options—such as pregnancy planning, preconception care, contraceptive methods, pre-exposure prophylaxis for partners, the concept of Undetectable =

Untransmittable (U=U),[64,65] and safer sex techniques (including instruction on the correct and consistent use of condoms) for prevention of sexual HIV transmission—should be discussed regularly (see U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use). Access to sexual health care, including contraception and abortion care, varies by state. To offer complete guidance, providers must be familiar with local laws and regulations. For additional information, refer to Prepregnancy Counseling and Care and Reproductive Options When One or Both Partners Have HIV in the Perinatal Guidelines. The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Adolescence offers guidance about the integration of sexual and reproductive health care in pediatric clinical settings.[66]

Interactions Between Contraceptives and Antiretroviral Drugs

People with HIV can use all available contraceptive methods, including hormonal contraceptives, implantable devices, intrauterine devices, transdermal patches, and vaginal rings.[67]

Several PIs and non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors alter the metabolism of oral contraceptives, which theoretically may reduce the efficacy of oral contraceptive agents or increase the risk of estrogen-related or progestin-related adverse effects.[68-70] Integrase strand transfer inhibitors appear to have no interaction with estrogen-based contraceptives.[71,72] For more information about potential interactions between ARV drugs and hormonal contraceptives, see Table 3. Drug Interactions Between Antiretroviral Agents and Hormonal Contraceptives in the Perinatal Guidelines.

Concerns about loss of bone mineral density with long-term use of depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA), with or without coadministration of ART (specifically TDF), should not preclude the use of DMPA as an effective contraceptive unless clinical evidence indicates bone fragility.

HIV and Pregnancy During Adolescence

Childbearing potential and the possibility of planned and unplanned pregnancy should be considered when selecting an ARV regimen for an adolescent. Adolescents who want to become pregnant should receive preconception counseling and care, including a discussion of pregnancy planning and special considerations when using ARV drugs during pregnancy (see Prepregnancy Counseling and Care in the Perinatal Guidelines). Pregnancy should not preclude the use of optimal therapeutic ARV regimens. Clinicians need to consider maternal and fetal safety, as well as the need to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV, when selecting regimens. See Table 7 in the Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs During Pregnancy section of the Perinatal Guidelines for more details about choosing an ARV regimen for use during pregnancy, including among adolescents with HIV. Pregnancies occur as people with PHIV enter adolescence and young adulthood.[73,74] A single center report from the United Kingdom highlighted the pregnancy experiences of young women (median age 23 years) with PHIV with one-third reporting at least one pregnancy.[75] A total of 47 pregnancies were reported among 24 young women with PHIV, with the following outcomes: 16 (34%) HIV-negative live births, 19 (40%) terminations, 9 (19%) miscarriages, and 3 ongoing pregnancies. Some studies suggest higher rates of adverse pregnancy outcomes—such as small-for-gestational-age infants—among those with PHIV than among those with NPHIV. Unplanned pregnancy is not uncommon in youth with PHIV.[74,76,77] One site serving pregnant women with HIV in Baltimore, U.S. reported higher rates of unintended pregnancy (83.6% vs. 68.8%, $P = 0.016$), lower viral suppression, and higher marijuana use during pregnancy in adolescents with HIV than in adults with HIV.[78] Adolescents with PHIV also may be more likely to have complex ARV histories, virologic failure, and drug resistance at the time of pregnancy.[78-80] However, the rate of perinatal transmission among people with PHIV who are receiving ART appears to be similar to the rate among people on ART with NPHIV.[81-85]

Other Considerations for Adolescents With HIV

Adolescence is a period of emerging recognition of sexual orientation and self-expression. Adolescents with HIV who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or nonbinary require both culturally competent providers and tailored medical care. Health care providers should ask patients nonjudgmental questions about their sexuality to determine whether they require specific medical and support services and whether those services are available locally. It is important to consider the possibility of drug–drug interactions in adolescents who are receiving both ART and medications such as testosterone or estrogen. Additional resources for the care of these adolescents can be found in Adolescents and Young Adults with HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines.

Transitioning Adolescents Into Adult HIV Care Settings

Transition to adult care is defined by Reiss et al. as "a multifaceted, active process that attends to the medical, psychosocial, cognitive and educational, or vocational needs of adolescents as they move from the child- to the adult-focused health care system."[86] Facilitating a successful transition for adolescents with HIV from their pediatric/adolescent care clinic to adult care is important but challenging.[87-90] Many adolescents disengage from care during the transition to adult care, putting them at risk for HIV progression and transmission to partners.[91-93] Pediatric and adolescent care providers and their multidisciplinary teams should have a formal written plan in place to transition adolescents to adult care. Although transition to adult care generally occurs when individuals are in their late teens or early 20s, discussion of and planning for the transition process should be initiated early in the teen years, with involvement from both the adolescent and their parents and/or caregivers. Care models for children and adolescents with PHIV tend to be family-centered, consisting of a multidisciplinary team that often includes physicians, nurses, social workers, and mental health professionals. These providers generally have long-standing relationships with patients and their families, and care is rendered in discreet, intimate settings. Qualitative research has demonstrated that established patient–provider relationships among adolescents with HIV and their providers are integral to HIV care engagement and that collaborative approaches to build trusted, new patient–provider relationships are necessary to support successful transition.[94,95] Although expert care also is provided under the adult HIV care medical model, adolescents and their caregivers may be unfamiliar with the busier, more individual-centered clinics that are typical of adult medical care providers. These providers often expect patients to assume a greater level of responsibility for their care, and adolescents may be uncomfortable with providers with whom they do not have a long-standing relationship.

One multisite study in the United States found that adolescents who transitioned to adult care at an older age reported greater satisfaction with their care than those who transitioned at a younger age. Additionally, adolescents who reported being able to perform certain tasks that were related to their care (e.g., making appointments, requesting prescriptions, arranging transportation to appointments) were more likely to be engaged in adult care.[96] Assessments of transition readiness using standardized tools (e.g., the Transition Readiness Assessment Questionnaire) are emerging as a potentially helpful part of the transition process and may be predictive of HIV outcomes, including virologic failure post-transition.[97,98] It may be beneficial to provide adolescents, caregivers, and their new adult medical care providers with support and guidance regarding the expectations for each person involved in the patient–provider relationship. In this situation, it may be helpful for a pediatric care provider and an adult care provider to share joint care of a patient for a period.

Adolescent care providers should have a candid discussion with the transitioning adolescent and their caregivers to understand what qualities the adolescent considers most important when choosing an adult care setting (e.g., confidentiality, small clinic size, low patient-to-provider ratio, availability of after-school or evening appointments). Social determinants—such as the patient's developmental status, behavioral/mental health comorbidities, housing, family support, employment status, recent discharge from foster care, peer pressure, illicit drug use, and incarceration—should be considered during transition.

No definitive model of transition to adult HIV care currently exists, and only a limited number of studies have reported on outcomes following transition, although research in this area is ongoing. However, emerging qualitative research has revealed the importance of the patient–provider relationship, including trust, the need for developmentally appropriate preparation for transition, and opportunities for growth and independence.[90,99] Recent studies have shown potential for successful transition and ongoing retention using models that include an individualized transition plan and a multidisciplinary approach that utilizes providers co-trained in both internal medicine and pediatrics, peer navigators, social workers, mental health support, and a youth-focused care model for adolescents who were already attending adult HIV clinics.[100-102]

Several studies have shown that youth with HIV who transitioned into adult care settings had higher rates of attrition from care than those who remained in pediatric/adolescent care. Some U.S. studies show that less than half of youth who transitioned care to an adult clinic remained in care after 9 to 12 months.[91,92,103] Other U.S. sites have reported initial success in transitioning adolescents but with declining post-transition retention over time.[104] In addition to poor retention in care, several studies have identified poor viral suppression rates in transitioned youth and young adults with HIV.[3] Pre-transition virologic failure and longer linkage times have been associated with worse outcomes post-transition.[90,93] Furthermore, some reports from the United Kingdom suggest that the mortality rate of adolescents with HIV increases after transition,[39,93,105] underscoring the need to critically examine transition and determine the best mechanisms to optimize the long-term outcomes for youth with PHIV.[91]

Some general guidelines, based on emerging evidence and consensus expert opinion, are available about transition plans and who might benefit most from them.[88,102,106-113] To maximize the likelihood of success, providers should prepare adolescents for transition long before it occurs. Attention to the following key areas could improve retention in care and minimize the risk of ART interruptions:

- Educating HIV care teams and staff about transitioning.
- Beginning discussions about transition early, before the actual transition process.
- Developing a written, individualized transition plan to address comprehensive care needs, including medical, psychosocial, and financial aspects of transitioning.
- Anticipating the impact of other common adolescent transitions such as going to college, moving out of parent's home, and starting employment with possible change in insurance.
- Optimizing communication between providers at pediatric/adolescent clinics and providers at adult clinics.
- Identifying adult care providers who are experts in providing care to adolescents and young adults.
- Fostering a trusting patient–provider relationship with new adult care providers.
- Addressing barriers caused by a lack of information, stigma, or disclosure concerns.

- Discussing the differences between the practice styles of adult clinics and pediatric/adolescent clinics.
- Helping youth develop the skills needed to manage their care, including counseling them on appointment management, the appropriate use of a primary care provider, the importance of prompt symptom recognition and reporting, and the importance of managing medications, insurance, and state and federal benefits.
- Identifying an optimal clinic model for a given setting (e.g., simultaneous transition of mental health and/or case management services versus a gradual phase-in).
- Clearly defining the desired outcomes for the transition, such as retention in care, ongoing access to other services (e.g., case management, mental health), clinical outcomes (e.g., viral suppression), and patient satisfaction.
- Implementing ongoing evaluations to measure the success of a transition model.
- Engaging in regular multidisciplinary case conferences between adult and adolescent care providers.
- Implementing interventions that may be associated with improved outcomes, such as support groups and mental health consultation.
- Identifying a care navigator who can provide support during the transition.

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Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV

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Panel's Recommendations
• Strategies to maximize adherence should be discussed before and/or at initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and before changing regimens (AIII). • Adherence to ART must be assessed and promoted at each visit, and strategies to maintain and/or improve adherence must be continually explored (AIII). • In addition to viral load monitoring, at least one other method of measuring adherence to ART should be used (AIII). • To facilitate adherence, simplified oral ART regimens (e.g., once daily, low pill burden) should be prescribed whenever feasible (AII*). • The option of long-acting injectable ART to facilitate and support adherence should be discussed with eligible children and adolescents and their caregivers (AIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Background

Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is a principal determinant of virologic suppression. Suboptimal adherence may include missed or late doses, treatment interruptions and discontinuations, and subtherapeutic or partial dosing. Poor adherence will result in subtherapeutic plasma antiretroviral (ARV) drug concentrations, facilitating the development of resistance to one or more drugs in a given ARV regimen and possible cross-resistance to other drugs in the same class. Multiple factors—including regimen potency, pharmacokinetics, drug interactions, viral fitness, and the genetic barrier to ARV resistance—influence the adherence–resistance relationship.[1-3] In addition to compromising the efficacy of the current regimen, suboptimal adherence can limit the options for future effective ARV drug regimens in people who develop multidrug-resistant HIV; it also can increase the risk of secondary transmission of drug-resistant virus. Chronic nonadherence and persistent viremia can lead to immune dysfunction and clinical complications (see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure).

With modern ART, the level of adherence needed to achieve viral suppression may be as low as 80% to 85%.[4, 5] However, emerging data indicate that less than 100% ARV adherence is associated with negative immunologic and clinical effects, even if the level of adherence is sufficient to achieve and sustain viral suppression.[6-9] A recent modeling analysis of data from studies in adults found that increasing adherence in persons who are virally suppressed could further reduce the risk of severe

non-AIDS events and death.[9] These data point out the need to prioritize addressing and maximizing adherence at visits for all children and adolescents, even those with viral suppression.

Poor adherence to ARV drugs is commonly encountered in the treatment of children and adolescents with HIV. Medication formulation and palatability, frequency of dosing, side effects, drug toxicities, and a child's age and developmental stage can affect adherence. In addition, many psychosocial, behavioral, and structural barriers for children and caregivers have also been associated with inadequate adherence. No consistent predictors of either good or poor adherence in children have been identified.[10-12] However, findings from the U.S. Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study (or PHACS) demonstrated that the prevalence of nonadherence increased with age. Among 381 children and adolescents with perinatally acquired HIV (PHIV), the prevalence of nonadherence increased from 31% to 50% ($P < 0.001$), and the prevalence of unsuppressed viral loads increased from 16% to 40% ($P < 0.001$) between preadolescence and late adolescence/young adulthood.[13] Similarly, in a report from the Early Pediatric Initiation Canada Cure Cohort, only 73% of the children with PHIV initiated on ART maintained viral suppression 3 years after it was first achieved.[14] Furthermore, several studies have demonstrated that adherence is not static and can vary with time on treatment.[15] In particular, adolescents often struggle to sustain adherence over time. In a study of 933 adolescents in South Africa aged 10 to 19 years who were followed for a 3- to 4-year period, adherence was assessed at baseline and two subsequent times via self-report of previous week ART adherence. Only 37% of participants reported consistent adherence at all three assessments. Both older age ($P = 0.007$) participants and those with horizontally acquired HIV ($P = 0.002$) were more likely to report inconsistent adherence across the three assessments.[16] These findings illustrate the difficulty of maintaining high levels of adherence and underscore the need to support children and their caregivers in developing strategies for long-term adherence to ART.

Specific Adherence Issues in Children

Adherence is a complex health behavior that is influenced by drug regimen, child and family factors, and the patient–provider relationship.[17, 18] Despite improvements over the last several years, the availability of once-daily, single-tablet ARV regimens and palatable formulations for infants and young children are still limited. Furthermore, infants and children are dependent on others for medication administration; adult caregivers may face barriers that undermine adherence in children, including forgetting doses, changes in routine, being too busy, and child refusal.[19, 20] Caregivers also may be inadequately prepared to support their child's adherence. In a study of communication strategies among caretakers of children with PHIV in rural South Africa, many caregivers used coercion and threats of grave consequences of nonadherence as a communication strategy to enforce adherence.[21] Some caregivers may place too much responsibility for managing medications on older children and adolescents before they are developmentally able to undertake such tasks.[22]

Adherence also may be jeopardized by social and health issues within a family (e.g., substance use, poor physical or mental health, death of a family member or friend, unstable housing, poverty, violence, involvement with the criminal justice system, limited social support).[23-26] Because stressful life events can disrupt adherence,[13] additional monitoring and adherence supports should be implemented at these times. Furthermore, children with PHIV and adolescents with non–perinatally acquired HIV typically enter care at different developmental stages with potentially different levels of caregiver support, which can affect adherence to ART in different ways. For adolescents transitioning from pediatric to adult care, the transition can be a vulnerable time for adherence. Such factors as changing providers, navigating the health care system as the primary medical decision-maker, and changes in insurance status and prescription access can precipitate interruptions in ART and barriers to optimal adherence. Immigrant children and families—particularly those who have

recently immigrated—may face social and cultural issues and language barriers, which can affect adherence.

Adherence Assessment and Monitoring

Providers should begin assessing potential barriers to adherence and discussing the importance of adherence at initiation of ART and when changing an ARV regimen. Evaluations should assess psychosocial and behavioral factors that may influence adherence, and interventions to help decrease these barriers should be supported. Providers should ask children and adolescents about their experiences with taking medications, as well as concerns and expectations about treatment, or address these issues with caregivers if the child is too young to engage in the conversation. Prior to treatment, it is important that the child/adolescent and/or caregiver explicitly agree to the treatment plan, which should include strategies to support adherence. It is also important to alert children/adolescents and caregivers to potential adverse effects (AEs) of ARV drugs (e.g., nausea, headaches, abdominal discomfort, sleep disturbances), explain how they can be managed, and emphasize the importance of informing the clinical team if they occur.

A routine adherence assessment should be incorporated into every clinical visit. Adherence is difficult to assess accurately; different methods of assessment have yielded different results, and each approach has limitations.[27-29] Viral load monitoring is the most useful indicator of adherence and is a routine component of monitoring individuals who are on ART (see Plasma HIV-1 RNA [Viral Load] and CD4 Count Monitoring in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). It also can be used as positive reinforcement to encourage continued adherence.[30] With the introduction of long-acting injectable (LAI) ART, adherence is related to receiving scheduled injections on time. Therefore, barriers to LAI ART adherence have shifted from home management to retention barriers. Optimizing adherence requires assessment of such factors as transportation, appointment scheduling, and school or work absences. In addition to viral load monitoring, providers should use at least one other method to assess adherence, such as self-report of missed doses.[28] Table 15 below includes common approaches to monitoring medication adherence. When assessing adherence, a nonjudgmental approach and positive rather than negative feedback can be more successful in encouraging accurate reporting related to ART adherence.[31]

Strategies to Improve and Support Adherence

When concerns about adherence emerge, the child/adolescent and/or caregiver should be seen and/or contacted frequently to assess adherence. Strategies to improve and support adherence should be individualized to the child/adolescent and/or caregivers based on the barriers identified, developmental stage, and unique circumstances. Strategies should include simplifying the ARV drug regimen, developing treatment plans that integrate medication administration into daily routines (e.g., associating medication administration with daily activities, such as brushing teeth), optimizing the use of social and community support services, and addressing barriers to attending LAI ART administration appointments, if applicable. Multifaceted approaches that include regimen-related strategies; educational, behavioral, and supportive strategies focused on children and families; and strategies that focus on health care providers may be more effective than one specific intervention. Table 16 below summarizes some of the strategies that can be used to support and improve adherence to ARV medications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer the evidence-based Partnership for Health—Medication Adherence to HIV care providers.[32]

Regimen-Related Strategies

Oral ARV regimens should be simplified with respect to the number of daily doses and number of pills or volume of liquid prescribed. Efforts should be made to prescribe once-daily ARV regimens and single-tablet regimens whenever feasible (see Table 18 in Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy). Several studies in adults have demonstrated better adherence with once-daily ARV regimens than with twice-daily regimens, as well as with single-tablet formulations than with multiple-tablet regimens.[33-37] See Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents for information about using fixed-dose combination tablets in children.

Long-acting injectable cabotegravir and rilpivirine (LA CAB/RPV) is an additional formulation option for adolescents ≥12 years of age who weigh at least 35 kg and who have sustained viral suppression but struggle with daily adherence (see the Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine sections for eligibility criteria). This formulation is not currently U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved for use in people who have not achieved sustained viral suppression. Using LA CAB/RPV in people who are not virally suppressed and are nonadherent is currently being studied in adults in the Long-Acting Therapy to Improve Treatment Success in Daily LifE (LATITUDE) trial.[38] A program in San Francisco demonstrated promising findings: adults with such barriers to ART adherence as housing instability, mental illness, and substance use who were treated with LA CAB/RPV despite not achieving viral suppression prior to initiation of therapy were able to attend injection appointments and achieve viral suppression with appropriate support and outreach.[39] Additionally, a small (n = 19) retrospective review of youth (aged 13–25) at a single location started LA CAB/RPV without achieving viral suppression first or using an oral lead-in therapy. Prior to enrollment, genotyping confirmed there was no resistance to cabotegravir or rilpivirine. All youth achieved viral suppression after 3 months on LA CAB/RPV and maintained viral suppression for 6 to 12 months when results were published.[40]

Drugs in the regimen should be chosen to minimize drug interactions and AEs (see Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance).[41] If drug-specific toxicities are thought to be contributing to nonadherence, efforts should be made to alleviate the AEs by changing the particular drug (or, if necessary, the drug regimen) when feasible. When nonadherence is related to the poor palatability of a liquid formulation or crushed pills, the offending taste can sometimes be masked with a small amount of flavoring syrup or food if simultaneous administration of food is not contraindicated (see Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information).[42] Unfortunately, the taste of lopinavir/ritonavir cannot be masked with flavoring syrup. A small study of children and youth aged 4 to 21 years found that training children to swallow pills was associated with improved adherence at 6 months post-training.[43] In poorly adherent children who are at risk of disease progression and who have severe and persistent aversion to taking medications, the use of a gastrostomy tube may be considered.[44]

Family-Related Adherence Strategies

Education is an essential component of establishing good medication adherence. Educating families about adherence should begin before initiating or changing ARV medications and should include a discussion of the goals of therapy, the importance of optimizing adherence, and the specific plans for supporting and maintaining a child's medication adherence. Caregiver adherence education strategies should include written and visual materials; a daily schedule illustrating times and doses of medications; and demonstration of the use of syringes, medication cups, and pill boxes. Additionally,

it may be helpful to assess the medication adherence of the caregiver or other household members who currently take ARV drugs or other chronic medications. Several behavioral tools can be used to integrate taking medications into a child's daily routine. The use of behavior modification techniques, especially the application of positive reinforcements and the use of small incentives (including financial incentives) for taking medications, can be effective tools to promote adherence.[45]

Because psychological issues and mental health disorders (e.g., depression, substance use) can affect ART adherence, recognition and treatment of these conditions is an essential part of preventing and treating nonadherence.[46, 47] The ability to talk with children about their medications is also important. If the child has not been informed of their HIV status, HIV disclosure should be discussed with the caregivers. In a systematic review of adolescents living in sub-Saharan Africa, 12 studies with 4,422 participants found that knowledge of HIV status was associated with adherence to ART (odds ratio [OR] 1.88; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.21–2.94; P = <0.001).[48] In interviews with caregivers of children with HIV in South Africa, investigators found that caregivers who had disclosed to their child that they (i.e., the child) had HIV were truthful in their communications and named the disease as HIV, but communication about HIV was infrequent and focused on pill taking. By comparison, those who had not disclosed used deception, deflection, and coercion in response to health-related questions and to enforce adherence.[21] The decision to disclose HIV status should not necessarily be expected to improve adherence but should be based on a comprehensive assessment of psychosocial and developmental factors and the needs of the child and family. Additional data from the Democratic Republic of Congo show that disclosure of HIV status to youth by trained peers may lead to improved adherence, as measured by viral suppression, compared to disclosure by parent or health care workers.[49]

The growing use of telemedicine visits, which allow remote and often face-to-face interaction, provides new opportunities to support families and visualize ART handling/swallowing, as well as to conduct directly observed therapy (DOT) in the home setting. The evidence is mixed as to the efficacy of programs that are designed to improve adherence through DOT, but DOT may still be a useful strategy for some people.[50-52] A randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a 12-week multicomponent intervention—including remote coaching, electronic dose monitoring, and tailored outreach (Triggered Escalating Real-Time Adherence)—for viremic youth in the United States demonstrated improved adherence but not viral suppression compared with the standard of care.[25]

Other strategies to support adherence include using mobile applications that remind people to take medications; setting cell phone alarms to go off at medication times; sending text-message reminders; conducting motivational interviews; providing pill boxes, blister packaging, and other adherence support tools; and delivering medications to the home. An analysis using the Cost-Effectiveness of Preventing AIDS Complications (or CEPAC)–Adolescent model of HIV disease and treatment modeled the impact of a 12-month **hypothetical** adherence intervention (based on an interactive smartphone-based reminder system) among youth with HIV in the United States. Compared with the standard of care, the analysis showed that youth-targeted adherence interventions, even with modest efficacy to improve virologic suppression, could improve life expectancy, prevent onward HIV transmissions, and be cost effective.[53]

However, several systematic reviews evaluating the use of mobile phone technologies to improve ART adherence (mHealth) have been published and results continue to be inconclusive on the effectiveness of digital interventions to improve adherence in adolescents. A recent systematic review of digital interventions to improve adherence in youth with HIV who live in sub-Saharan Africa provided mixed evidence, with two of six trials finding significant improvement in viral suppression and the remaining four trials showing no significant improvement in adherence-related measures.[54] In another review, the authors found what they described as "ambiguous results with

high variability" about the effectiveness of mHealth interventions to improve adherence in low- and middle-income countries.[55] Of 17 studies, 56% reported a statistically significant positive impact of mHealth on adherence; 44% reported insignificant results. Another systematic review reported that the efficacy of mobile short message service (SMS) interventions varied depending on the specific SMS intervention tested.[56]

In a longitudinal cohort study, the association between medication-specific reactance—an aversive response to perceived threats against personal agency—and treatment failure was examined in a cohort of adolescents with HIV in Botswana. Reactant individuals may hear health messaging as a threat to their perceived freedom and respond by engaging in the opposed behavior. Adolescents, scoring >4 on a 5-point scale had 2.05-fold (95% CI, 1.23–3.41) greater odds of treatment failure than nonreactant youth ($P = 0.043$). Psychological reactance needs further study and may provide some insight into adherence behaviors among youth; it also may be important to consider in adherence counseling and in designing interventions.[57] Similarly, a cross-sectional analysis among youth in England with PHIV found that youth with greater concerns regarding ART had a reduced odds of adherence.[58]

Two studies provided evidence of the efficacy of peer-based interventions to improve ART adherence and viral suppression among adolescents and young people with HIV in Africa. In Project YES! in Ndola, Zambia, 273 youth aged 15 to 24 years receiving HIV care in four health facilities, including a pediatric clinic, were randomly assigned to monthly meetings with youth peer mentors. At 6 months, viral suppression improved in both study arms, but among participants in care at the pediatric clinic, the rate of viral suppression increased from 37.5% to 70.5% in the intervention arm versus 60.3% to 59.4% in the comparison arm (interaction term OR, 4.66; 95% CI, 1.84–11.78).[59] Another RCT tested the efficacy of a peer-led differentiated service delivery intervention on HIV clinical outcomes among adolescents with HIV aged 13 to 19 years in rural Zimbabwe. Sixteen clinics were randomized to standard of care or the enhanced intervention in which adolescents were assigned a community adolescent treatment supporter; attended monthly support group; and received text messages, calls, home visits, and clinic-based counseling. At 96 weeks, among 479 adolescents with data, 52 (25%) adolescents in the intervention arm versus 97 (36%) in the control arm had viral load >1,000 copies/mL or had died (adjusted prevalence ratio 0.58; 95% CI, 0.36–0.94; $P = 0.03$). These studies demonstrate that peer-based interventions have the potential to improve adherence and health outcomes among youth with HIV.[60]

In addition to clinic- and community-based programs, camp experiences can offer a source of peer support for children and youth with HIV and other chronic illnesses. Although data are limited,[61-63] many children and youth with HIV report attendance to camp programs to be empowering and helpful to learn about adherence to daily ART.

Further evidence of the efficacy of peer-support interventions for people with HIV comes from a recent systematic review and meta-analysis, including 20 RCTs comprising 7,605 participants from nine countries. The authors found superior retention in care (risk ratio 1.07; 95% CI, 1.02–1.12 at 12 months follow-up) and better ART adherence (risk ratio 1.06; 95% CI, 1.01–1.10 at 3 months of follow-up) but no statistically significant difference in viral suppression (risk ratio 1.02; 95% CI, 0.94–1.11 at 6 months of follow-up) among peer-support participants.[64]

Health Care Provider–Related Strategies

To improve and support ART adherence, providers should maintain a nonjudgmental attitude, establish trust with children and adolescents and their caregivers, and identify mutually acceptable goals for care. Providers can improve adherence through their relationships with the child/adolescent

and families, starting at the first visit together when they obtain explicit agreement on the medication and treatment plan, as well as strategies to support adherence. Fostering a trusting relationship and engaging in open communication are particularly important. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted with adolescents and their caregivers participating in a longitudinal adherence study. Participants who self-reported high adherence but for whom electronically monitored data reflected low adherence were selected. Adolescents described hiding and discarding pills and lying about their adherence. Adolescents and parents considered negative feedback for prior poor adherence as motivation for efforts to hide current poor adherence. The authors suggest that positive feedback for truth-telling may help develop family and staff alliances in support of adherence.[31]

Provider characteristics that have been associated with improved adherence in adults include consistency, willingness to give information and ask questions, technical expertise, and commitment to follow-up. Creating an environment in the health care setting that is child-centered and includes caregivers in adherence support also has been shown to improve treatment outcomes. Providing comprehensive multidisciplinary care (e.g., with nurses, case managers, pharmacists, social workers, psychiatric care providers) also may better serve more complex child/adolescent and family needs, including adherence. Provider-initiated education about viral load and counseling targeted at understanding viral load results, the health benefits of undetectable viral load, and the Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) concept are other strategies providers can use. Avoidant coping strategies or history of trauma may impact adherence. Although research is limited, use of trauma-informed care practices can be considered.[65]

Table 15. Approaches for Monitoring Medication Adherence

Routine Assessment of Medication Adherence in Clinical Care[a]	Description
Monitor viral load.	Viral load monitoring should be done more frequently after initiating or changing medications.[a]
Assess a quantitative self-report of missed doses.	Ask the child/adolescent and/or caregiver about the number of missed doses over a defined period (e.g., the last 1, 3, or 7 days). Alternatively, ask, "How many days did you take your medication during the past week?"
Request a description of the medication regimen.	Ask the child/adolescent and/or caregiver about the name, appearance, and number of medications and how often the medications are taken.
Assess barriers to medication administration.	Engage the child/adolescent and/or caregiver in a dialogue about potential barriers to adherence and strategies to overcome them.
Monitor pharmacy refills.	Approaches include a pharmacy-based or clinic-based assessment of on-time medication refills.
Employ telemedicine to monitor and support medication administration.	Telemedicine visits allow remote and often face-to-face contact and provide new opportunities to support families; to visualize ART preparation, handling, and swallowing; and to conduct DOT in the home setting.
Conduct pill counts.	Approaches include asking people to bring medications to the clinic, conducting home visits, or providing referrals to community health nursing.
Monitor attendance for ART injection appointments among adolescents on LAI regimens.	For individuals on LAI ART, adherence is related to receiving scheduled injections on time. Therefore, reducing barriers to adherence should focus on scheduling convenient appointments, minimizing school and work absences, and ensuring transportation to appointments.
Targeted Approaches to Monitoring Adherence in Special Circumstances	**Description**
Implement DOT in person and via telemedicine.	Include a brief period of hospitalization if indicated.
Measure drug concentration in plasma or DBS.	Measuring drug concentrations can be considered for particular drugs.
Approaches to Monitoring Medication Adherence in Research Settings	**Description**
Measure drug concentrations in hair.	Measuring hair drug concentrations can be considered for particular drugs; it provides a good measure of adherence over time.[27, 66, 67]
Use electronic monitoring devices.	Approaches include MEMS caps and Wisepill.
Use mobile phone–based technologies.	Approaches include interactive voice response, text messaging, and mobile apps.

[a] See Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection regarding the frequency of adherence assessment after initiating or changing therapy.

Key: app = application; ART = antiretroviral therapy; DBS = dried blood spot; DOT = directly observed therapy; LAI = long-acting injectable; MEMS = Medication Event Monitoring System

Table 16. Strategies to Improve Adherence to Antiretroviral Medications

Initial Intervention Strategies
• Establish trust and identify mutually acceptable goals for care. • Obtain explicit agreement on the need for treatment and adherence. • Determine whether the child is aware of their HIV status. Consider talking to the child's caregivers about disclosing this information to the child in a developmentally appropriate way. • Identify psychosocial, behavioral, or structural barriers that may affect adherence and help the child and/or family access resources to help eliminate these barriers. • Identify family, friends, health team members, and others who can support adherence. • Educate the child/adolescent and family about the critical role of adherence in therapy outcome, including the relationship between partial adherence and resistance and the potential impact on future drug regimen choices. • With the child/adolescent and family together, develop a treatment plan that they believe is achievable. • Address any concerns child/adolescent and caregivers have about the medications. • Work with the child/adolescent and family to make specific plans for taking medications as prescribed and for supporting adherence. Assist them in arranging administration during day care, school, and in other settings, when needed. Consider home delivery of medications. • Identify barriers—such as co-pays and insurance access—related to medication access to help prevent interruptions in ART. • Schedule a home visit or telemedicine visit to review medications and determine how they will be administered in the home setting. • In certain circumstances, consider a brief period of hospitalization for patient education and to assess the tolerability of the chosen medications.
Medication Strategies
• Choose the simplest regimen possible; reduce dosing frequency, pill size, and number of pills (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents). Consider LAI regimens (e.g., LA CAB/RPV) for eligible children and adolescents. • When choosing a regimen, consider the child/adolescent's routines and potential variations in individual and family activities. • Choose the most palatable medicine possible (pharmacists may be able to add syrups or flavoring agents to improve palatability). • Choose drugs with the fewest AEs; provide anticipatory guidance for managing AEs. • Simplify food requirements for medication administration. • Prescribe drugs carefully to avoid adverse drug–drug interactions. • Assess pill-swallowing capacity and offer pill-swallowing training and aids (e.g., pill-swallowing cup, pill glide). Adjust pill size as needed or check if the pill can be crushed. Consider dispersible formulations if possible. See drug sections in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about available formulations and administration of individual drugs. • Choose ARV regimens with high genetic barriers to resistance, when available, if there are concerns about adherence.

Table 16. Strategies to Improve Adherence to Antiretroviral Medications

Follow-Up Intervention Strategies
• Members of the multidisciplinary team should monitor adherence at each visit. In between visits, adherence can be monitored and supported by telephone, email, text, and other secure applications; confidentiality of any communication approach must be ensured. • Provide ongoing support, encouragement, and understanding of the difficulties associated with maintaining adherence to daily medication regimens. • Provide education and counseling that explain the meaning and significance of viral load results. • Use education aids, including pictures, calendars, and stickers. • Encourage the use of pill boxes, reminders, mobile apps, and alarms. • Provide follow-up clinic visits, telephone calls, text messages, and telemedicine visits to support and assess adherence. • Provide access to support groups, peer groups, summer camp programs, or one-on-one counseling for caregivers and individuals. • Provide referrals and support access to counseling and treatment services for individuals with identified mental health problems, including depression and substance abuse. • Provide pharmacist-based adherence support, such as medication education and counseling, blister packs, refill reminders, automatic refills, and home delivery of medications. • Consider DOT at home, in the clinic, or, in certain circumstances, during a brief period of inpatient hospitalization. • Consider gastrostomy tube use in certain circumstances. • Information on other interventions to consider can be found at the HIV Compendium of Best Practices on the CDC's website.

Key: AE = adverse effect; app = application; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; DOT = directly observed therapy; LA CAB/RPV = long-acting injectable cabotegravir and rilpivirine; LAI = long-acting injectable;

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Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Panel's Recommendations
• In children with HIV who have severe or life-threatening toxicity (e.g., a hypersensitivity reaction), all antiretroviral (ARV) drugs should be stopped immediately (AIII). Once symptoms of toxicity have resolved, ARV therapy should be resumed with substitution of a different ARV drug or drugs for the offending agent(s) (AII*). • When modifying ARV therapy because of toxicity or intolerance to a specific drug in children with virologic suppression, changing one drug in a multidrug regimen is permissible; if possible, an agent with a different toxicity and adverse effect profile should be chosen (AI*). • The toxicity and the medication presumed responsible should be documented in the medical record of the patient, and the caregiver and patient should be advised of the drug-related toxicity (AIII). • In general, dose reduction is not a recommended option for management of ARV toxicity (AII*).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Medication Toxicity or Intolerance

The overall benefits of viral suppression and improved immune function due to effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) far outweigh the risks associated with the adverse effects (AEs) of some antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. However, AEs have been reported with the use of all ARV drugs. Currently recommended ARV regimens are associated with fewer serious and intolerable AEs than regimens used in the past. In the mid-1990s, when combination ART was introduced, AEs were among the most common reasons for switching or discontinuing therapy and for medication nonadherence[1-3] (see Adverse Effects of Antiretroviral Agents in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). In recent clinical trials and real-world observational studies, however, few ARV-treated patients had treatment-limiting AEs.[4-13]

The incidence of some longer-term complications of ART (e.g., bone or renal toxicity, dyslipidemia, accelerated cardiovascular disease) might be underestimated, because most clinical trials enroll a select group of patients based on highly specific inclusion criteria, and the duration of participant follow-up is relatively short.[14-16] To achieve sustained viral suppression during a child's lifetime, both short- and long-term ART toxicities must be anticipated. The clinician must consider potential AEs and issues with medication palatability when selecting an ARV regimen, as well as the individual child's comorbidities, concomitant medications, and history of drug intolerance or viral resistance.

The AEs caused by ARV drugs can vary from mild, more common symptoms (e.g., gastrointestinal intolerance, fatigue) to infrequent but severe and life-threatening illness. Drug-related toxicity can be acute (i.e., occurring soon after a drug has been administered), subacute (i.e., occurring within 1 or 2 days after administration), or late (i.e., occurring after prolonged drug administration). For a few ARV medications, pharmacogenetic markers associated with the risk of early toxicity have been identified;

however, the only marker that is routinely screened for is HLA-B*5701, a marker for abacavir (ABC) hypersensitivity.[17] For selected children aged <3 years who require treatment with efavirenz (EFV), an additional pharmacogenetic marker, cytochrome P450 2B6 genotype, should be assessed in an attempt to prevent toxicity[17-21] (see Efavirenz in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). For such agents as EFV, therapeutic ranges for plasma concentrations, as determined by therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM), may indicate the need for dose reduction or modification of ART in patients who experience central nervous system (CNS) AEs.

The most common acute and chronic AEs that are associated with currently recommended ARV drugs or drug classes are presented in Tables 17a–17k, which are listed below. These tables include information on common causative drugs, estimated frequency of occurrence, timing of symptoms, risk factors, potential preventive measures, and suggested clinical management strategies. The tables also include selected references that provide further information about these toxicities in pediatric patients.

- Table 17a. Central Nervous System Toxicity
- Table 17b. Dyslipidemia
- Table 17c. Gastrointestinal Effects
- Table 17d. Hematologic Effects
- Table 17e. Hepatic Events
- Table 17f. Insulin Resistance, Asymptomatic Hyperglycemia, and Diabetes Mellitus
- Table 17g. Lactic Acidosis
- Table 17h. Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain
- Table 17i. Nephrotoxic Effects
- Table 17j. Osteopenia and Osteoporosis
- Table 17k. Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Information on toxicities associated with older ARV drugs that are no longer recommended can be found in the Archived Drugs section and older toxicity tables in the Pediatric ARV Archived Guidelines.

Management

ART-associated AEs can range from acute and potentially life threatening to chronic and insidious. Serious life-threatening events (e.g., hypersensitivity reaction [HSR] due to ABC, symptomatic hepatotoxicity, severe cutaneous reactions) require the immediate discontinuation of all ARV drugs and reinitiation of an alternative regimen without overlapping toxicity. Toxicities that are not life threatening (e.g., urolithiasis caused by atazanavir, renal tubulopathy caused by tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) usually can be managed by substituting another ARV agent for the presumed causative agent without interrupting ART. Other chronic, non–life-threatening AEs (e.g., dyslipidemia, weight gain, insulin resistance) can be addressed either by switching the potentially causative agent for another agent or by managing the AE with additional pharmacological or nonpharmacological interventions, such as lifestyle modification.[22]

Management strategies must be individualized for each child, taking into account the severity of the toxicity, the child's viral suppression status, and the available ARV options. Clinicians should anticipate the appearance of common, self-limited AEs and reassure patients that many AEs will resolve after the first few weeks of ART. For example, when initiating therapy with boosted protease inhibitors (PIs),

many patients experience gastrointestinal AEs, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Instructing patients to take PIs with food may help minimize these AEs. Some patients may require antiemetic and antidiarrheal agents for symptom management. CNS AEs are encountered commonly when initiating therapy with EFV. Symptoms can include dizziness, drowsiness, vivid dreams, or insomnia. Patients should be instructed to take EFV-containing regimens at bedtime and on an empty stomach to help minimize these AEs. Patients should be advised that these AEs usually diminish within 2 to 4 weeks of initiating therapy in most people; however, they may persist for months in some patients and may require a medication change.[23] In addition, mild rash can be ameliorated with drugs, such as antihistamines. Addressing AEs is essential, because continued use of an ARV agent that a patient finds intolerable may lead to treatment discontinuation,[24] risking viral rebound and the development of drug resistance.

In patients who experience intolerable AEs from ART, every attempt should be made to identify the offending agent and replace the drug with another effective ARV agent as soon as possible.[5,25] For mild-to-moderate toxicities, changing to a drug with a different toxicity profile might be sufficient, and discontinuation of all therapy might not be required. When interrupting a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI)–based regimen, many experts will stop the NNRTI for 7 to 14 days before stopping the dual nucleoside analogue reverse transcriptase backbone because of the long half-life of NNRTI drugs. However, patients who have a severe or life-threatening toxicity (e.g., HSR—see Table 17k. Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions) should stop all components of the drug regimen simultaneously, regardless of drug half-life. Once the offending drug or alternative cause for the AE has been determined, planning can begin for—

- Resuming therapy with a new ARV regimen that does not contain the offending drug, *or*
- Resuming therapy with the original regimen if the event is attributable to another cause.

All drugs in the ARV regimen should then be started simultaneously, rather than one at a time, while observing the patient for AEs.

When therapy is changed because of toxicity or intolerance in a patient with virologic suppression, agents with different toxicity and AE profiles should be chosen, when possible.[26-29] Clinicians should have comprehensive knowledge of the toxicity profile of each agent before selecting a new regimen. In the event of drug intolerance, changing a single drug in a multidrug regimen is permissible only for patients whose viral loads are undetectable.

In general, dose reduction is not a recommended strategy for toxicity management, because inadequate ARV drug levels may lead to decreased virologic efficacy and, for most agents, there is no clear relationship between drug levels and the AE. Therefore, TDM is rarely recommended; however, it may be considered to assist in the management of a child with mild or moderate toxicity if the toxicity is thought to be the result of a drug concentration exceeding the normal therapeutic range and other ARV options are limited.[30-32] An expert in the management of pediatric HIV should be consulted when considering dose reduction based on the results of TDM. Dose reduction after TDM has been studied most extensively with EFV, because increased CNS toxicity has clearly been associated with higher levels of EFV (see Efavirenz in Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information).

To summarize, management strategies for drug intolerance include the following:

- Symptomatic treatment of mild-to-moderate transient AEs

- Switching one drug for another drug that is active against a patient's virus (e.g., changing to ABC for zidovudine-related anemia, changing to a PI or integrase strand transfer inhibitor for EFV-related CNS symptoms) (see Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy)
- Using dose reduction, guided by TDM, after consulting with an expert in pediatric HIV

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Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Global CNS Depression	LPV/r oral solution that contains both ethanol (42.4% v/v) and propylene glycol (15.3% w/v) as excipients	Onset • 1–6 days after starting LPV/r Presentation *Neonates/Premature Infants* • Global CNS depression (e.g., abnormal EEG, altered state of consciousness, somnolence)	Unknown; rare case reports have been published.	Prematurity Low birth weight Aged <14 days (whether birth was premature or term)	Avoid use of LPV/r until a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks and a postnatal age of ≥14 days unless no other alternatives are available. See Lopinavir/Ritonavir.	Discontinue LPV/r; symptoms should resolve in 1–5 days. If needed, reintroducing LPV/r can be considered when the child is outside the vulnerable period (i.e., a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks and a postnatal age ≥14 days).
Neuropsychiatric Symptoms and Other CNS Manifestations	EFV	Onset • For many symptoms, onset is 1–2 days after starting EFV. • Many symptoms subside or diminish by 2–4 weeks, but symptoms may persist in a significant proportion of children.	Variable, depending on age, symptoms, and assessment method Children • 24% of children experienced any EFV-related CNS manifestation in one case series, with 18% of participants requiring drug discontinuation.	Insomnia is associated with elevated EFV trough concentration (≥4 mcg/mL). CYP2B6 polymorphisms that decrease EFV metabolism and cause increased EFV serum concentrations (CYP2B6 516 T/T genotype or co-carriage of CYP2B6 516 G/T and 983 T/C variants)	Avoid use of EFV for initial ART in children and adolescents to prevent EFV-associated CNS side effects. See What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV.	If symptoms are excessive or persistent, obtain EFV trough concentration. If EFV trough concentration is >4 mcg/mL and/or symptoms are severe, strongly consider drug substitution if a suitable alternative exists.[a] Alternatively, consider dose reduction with repeat TDM and dose adjustment (with input from an expert pharmacologist).

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		Presentation (May Include One or More of the Following) *Neuropsychiatric Symptoms* • Abnormal dreams • Psychosis • Suicidal ideation or attempted/completed suicide *Other CNS Manifestations* • Dizziness • Somnolence • Insomnia or poor sleep quality • Impaired concentration • Seizures (including absence seizures) • Cerebellar dysfunction (e.g., tremor, dysmetria, ataxia) Note: CNS side effects (e.g., impaired concentration, abnormal dreams, sleep disturbances) may be more difficult to assess in children.	• Five of 45 participants (11%) experienced new-onset seizures in one study of children aged <36 months; two of these participants had alternative causes for seizures. • Cases of cerebellar dysfunction have been reported in children with very high EFV plasma levels. Adults • 30% incidence for any CNS manifestations of any severity • 6% incidence of EFV-related, severe CNS manifestations, including suicidality. However, evidence is conflicting about whether EFV use increases the incidence of suicidality. • Two case series reported late-onset ataxia with or without encephalopathy associated with high EFV levels.	History of psychiatric illness or use of psychoactive drugs	In situations where EFV treatment may be indicated, consider the following: • Administer EFV on an empty stomach, preferably at bedtime. • Prescreen for psychiatric illness; avoid use in the presence of psychiatric illness, including depression or suicidal thoughts. Avoid concomitant use of psychoactive drugs. • Consider using TDM in children with mild or moderate EFV-associated toxicities.	

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
	RPV	Onset • Most symptoms occur in the first 4–8 weeks of treatment. Presentation *Neuropsychiatric Symptoms* • Depressive disorders • Suicidal ideation • Abnormal dreams/nightmares *Other CNS Manifestations* • Headache • Dizziness • Insomnia • Somnolence	Children • Depressive disorders of all severity grades were reported in 22.2% of children and adolescents aged 12–17 years.. • Somnolence was reported in 5 of 36 children (14%). Adults • CNS/neuropsychiatric adverse events of all severity grades were reported in 43% of participants at 96 weeks (most were Grade 1). Depressive disorders of all severity grades were reported in 9% of participants; <1% of participants discontinued RPV because of severe depressive disorders. Higher frequency of depression and dizziness reported when coadministered with DTG.	History of neuropsychiatric illness	Monitor carefully for depressive disorders and other CNS symptoms.	Consider drug substitution in cases of severe symptoms.

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
	RAL	Onset • As early as 3–4 days after starting RAL Presentation • Increased psychomotor activity • Headaches • Insomnia • Depression • Cerebellar dysfunction (e.g., tremor, dysarthria, ataxia)	Children • Increased psychomotor activity was reported in one child. Adults • Headache • Insomnia (<5% in adult trials) • Rare case reports of cerebellar dysfunction in adults	Elevated RAL concentrations Cotreatment with TDF, a PPI, or inhibitors of UGT1A1 Prior history of insomnia or depression	Prescreen for psychiatric symptoms. Monitor carefully for CNS symptoms. Use with caution in the presence of drugs that increase RAL concentration.	Consider drug substitution (RAL or coadministered drug) in cases of severe insomnia or other neuropsychiatric symptoms.
	DTG	Onset • Anytime, but usually 7–30 days after starting DTG Presentation *Neuropsychiatric Symptoms* • Depression or exacerbation of preexisting depression	Children • In a retrospective cohort analysis, neuropsychiatric events that resulted in discontinuation occurred in 2 of 29 (6.8%) children who initiated DTG.	Preexisting depression or other psychiatric illness History of ARV-related neuropsychiatric symptoms	Use with caution in the presence of psychiatric illness, especially in children and adolescents with depression or a history of ARV-related neuropsychiatric symptoms. Consider morning dosing of DTG.	For persistent or severe neuropsychiatric symptoms, consider discontinuing DTG if a suitable alternative exists. For mild symptoms, continue DTG and counsel that symptoms likely will resolve with time.

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		• Anxiety • Self-harm thoughts, suicidal ideation, or attempted/ completed suicide • Drowsiness • Neurocognitive deficits (lower total competence and school performance) *Other CNS Manifestations (Generally Mild)* • Sleep disturbances • Dizziness • Headache	• Higher frequency of suicidal ideation or behavior reported in children in the ODYSSEY trial receiving DTG (2.3%) than those receiving SOC ARVs (1.4%). Overall neuropsychiatric adverse events were 4.3% in children receiving DTG and 2.2% in children receiving SOC ARVs. Most neuropsychiatric AEs were transient and did not lead to treatment changes. Adults • 2.7% of the neuropsychiatric AEs reported in a large prospective cohort resulted in treatment discontinuation. • Higher frequency of neuropsychiatric symptoms reported with DTG than with other INSTIs. A class effect has been suggested.	Higher frequency of overall neuropsychiatric symptoms reported when DTG is coadministered with ABC, and of depression and dizziness when DTG is coadministered with RPV. However, evidence is conflicting for ABC association.		

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
	BIC	Onset • 1–63 days after starting BIC (as late as 233 days for schizoaffective disorders) Presentation *Neuropsychiatric Symptoms* • Depression or exacerbation of preexisting depression • Suicidal ideation or attempted suicide • Schizoaffective disorders • Anxiety *Other CNS Manifestations (Generally Mild)* • Sleep disturbances • Dizziness • Insomnia	Children • One child (1%) had Grade 2 insomnia and anxiety that led to drug discontinuation in clinical trials. Adults • Overall, the frequency of neuropsychiatric events in BIC and DTG comparator arms appeared similar in adult clinical trials. • Abnormal dreams, dizziness, and insomnia occurred in 1–5% of adults. • Suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, schizoaffective disorders, and depression occurred in <1% of adults. • A recent study reported a 3.3% short-term BIC-related discontinuation rate due to neuropsychiatric AEs after ART switch in a large cohort of adults with HIV in routine clinical practice setting.	Preexisting depression or other psychiatric conditions History of ARV-related neuropsychiatric symptoms	Use with caution in the presence of psychiatric conditions or in children and adolescents with a history of ARV-related neuropsychiatric symptoms.	For persistent or severe neuropsychiatric symptoms, consider discontinuing BIC if a suitable alternative exists. For mild symptoms, continue BIC and counsel that symptoms are likely to resolve with time.

Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/ Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
	CAB	Presentation *Neuropsychiatric Symptoms (Generally Mild or Moderate, Occasionally Serious)* • Mood disorders, including depression and suicidal ideation or attempt • Anxiety disorders *Other CNS Manifestations (Generally Mild or Moderate)* • Sleep disorders • Dizziness • Headache • Somnolence	Children • Insomnia was reported in 1 of 8 adolescents in the ongoing MOCHA trial. Adults • 2–4% pooled incidence was reported in Phase 3 trials for CNS AEs, including sleep disorders, dizziness, and headache. • 5% pooled incidence for anxiety, 3% for depression and <1% for suicidal ideation in Phase 3 trials at 48 weeks, with comparable incidence in CAB and control groups.	Preexisting depression or other psychiatric conditions could be contributing factors, but causal links have not clearly been identified. CAB exposure did not differ between study participants with and without CNS or neuropsychiatric manifestations.	Monitor individuals for depressive symptoms or self-injurious thoughts or behavior, especially with prior history of such symptoms.	Promptly evaluate severe depressive symptoms, self-injurious behavior, or other CNS symptoms for a possible relationship with CAB and assess risks and benefits of continued CAB treatment. If CAB is discontinued— • Counsel the individual about prolonged residual CAB levels in the blood for 52 weeks or longer and monitor frequently for symptom resolution. • Ensure that a new suppressive regimen is started within 30 days of last injection.

[a] Even in cases wherein patients have achieved sustained virologic suppression (i.e., suppression for 6–12 months) on their current regimen, clinicians should consider switching patients to new ARV regimens to permit the use of pills instead of liquids; reduce pill burden; allow the use of once-daily medications; reduce the risk of adverse events; minimize drug interactions; and align a child's regimen with widely used, efficacious adult regimens. See Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy for more information.

Key: ABC = abacavir; AE = adverse event; ARV = antiretroviral; BIC = bictegravir; CAB = cabotegravir; CNS = central nervous system; CYP2B6 = cytochrome P450 2B6; DTG = dolutegravir; EEG = electroencephalogram; EFV = efavirenz; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; MOCHA = More Options for Children and Adolescents; PPI = proton pump inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; RPV = rilpivirine; SOC = standard of care; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TDM = therapeutic drug monitoring; UGT1A = uridine diphosphate-glucuronosyltransferase family 1 member A complex; v/v = volume per volume; w/v = weight per volume

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Table 17b. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Dyslipidemia

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Dyslipidemia	PIs • All PIs, especially RTV-boosted PIs; lower incidence reported with DRV/r and ATV, with or without RTV NRTIs • Lower incidence reported with TDF than with TAF NNRTIs • Lower incidence reported with NVP, RPV, and ETR than with EFV INSTIs • EVG/c	Onset • As early as 2 weeks to months after beginning therapy Presentation *PIs* • ↑ LDL-C, TC, and TG *NRTIs* • ↑ LDL-C, TC, and TG. Significant increase in plasma lipid values was observed in adults switching from TDF to TAF, regardless of third agent or presence of a boosting agent. *NNRTIs* • ↑ LDL-C, TC, and HDL-C	Reported frequency varies with specific ARV regimen, duration of ART, and the specific laboratory parameters used to diagnose lipid abnormalities. 10% to 20% of young children receiving LPV/r will have lipid abnormalities. 40% to 75% of older children and adolescents with prolonged ART history will have lipid abnormalities.	Advanced HIV disease High-fat, high-cholesterol diet Sedentary lifestyle Obesity Hypertension Smoking Family history of dyslipidemia or premature ASCVD Metabolic syndrome Fat maldistribution	Prevention • Low-fat diet • Exercise • Smoking-prevention counseling • Use of ARV drugs, such as INSTIs, and to a lesser extent, newer PIs (e.g., ATV, DRV), is associated with a lower prevalence of dyslipidemia. • When considering a TDF-based or TAF-based regimen, the lipid-lowering beneficial effect of TDF should be weighed against its potential for increased renal and bone toxicities.	Assess all patients for additional ASCVD risk factors. Patients with HIV are considered to be at moderate risk for ASCVD.[b] ARV regimen changes should be considered, especially when the patient is receiving older PIs (e.g., LPV/r) and/or RTV boosting. Switching to a PI-sparing regimen, a PI-based regimen with a more favorable lipid profile, or COBI boosting causes a decline in LDL-C or TG values. The lipid-lowering effect of an ARV regimen switch on LDL-C is less pronounced than with statin therapy but may be enough to re-establish a healthy lipid profile. Refer patients to a lipid specialist early if LDL-C is ≥250 mg/dL or TG is ≥500 mg/dL.

Table 17b. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Dyslipidemia

			Pooled dyslipidemia prevalence of 39.5% and an incidence of 32% (191 per 1,000 person-years) reported in a meta-analysis and a review of a large consortium of prospective observational cohorts, respectively.		Monitoring[a] • Obtain fasting (or non-fasting) lipid profile (TC, HDL-C, non-HDL-C, LDL-C, and TG) twice (>2 weeks but ≤3 months apart) and average these results. Monitor every 6 months (for abnormal results) or every 12 months (for normal results). • If TG or LDL-C is elevated or if a patient has additional risk factors, obtain FLP. *Children With Lipid Abnormalities and/or Additional Risk Factors* • Obtain 12-hour FLP before initiating or changing therapy and every 6 months thereafter (more often if indicated). *Children Receiving Lipid-Lowering Therapy With Statins or Fibrates* • Obtain 12-hour FLP, LFT, and CK at 4 weeks, 8 weeks, and 3 months after starting lipid therapy. • If minimal alterations in AST, ALT, and CK are indicated, monitor every 3–4 months during the first year and every 6 months thereafter (or as clinically indicated).	If LDL-C is ≥130 mg/dL but <250 mg or TG is ≥100 mg/dL but <500 mg/dL, the following staged treatment approach is recommended by the NHLBI guidelines[b]: • Implement diet, nutrition, and lifestyle management for 6–9 months. Consult with a dietician if one is available. • If a 6- to 9-month trial of lifestyle modification fails and the patient is aged ≥10 years, consider implementing lipid-lowering therapy after consulting a lipid specialist. • Statin therapy should be considered for patients with elevated LDL-C levels. NHLBI guidelines provide recommendations for statin therapy in patients with specific LDL-C levels and risk factors.[b] Concurrent substitution—preferably to ARV drugs with no inhibitory or inducing effect on CYP3A4 or OATP1B1 (e.g., INSTI)—also should be considered as appropriate to limit drug–drug interaction potential. • Drug therapy can be considered in cases of severe hypertriglyceridemia (TG ≥500 mg/dL). Fibrates (gemfibrozil and fenofibrate) may be used.

Table 17b. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Dyslipidemia

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
					• Repeat FLP 4 weeks after increasing doses of antihyperlipidemic agents.	Refer to Statin Therapy in People With HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines for additional recommendations on statin therapy for people with HIV who are aged <40 years.[c] The long-term risks of lipid abnormalities in children who are receiving ART are unclear. However, persistent dyslipidemia in children may lead to premature ASCVD.

[a] Because of the burden of collecting fasting blood samples, some practitioners routinely measure cholesterol and TG from nonfasting blood samples and follow up abnormal values with a test done in the fasted state.

[b] Refer to the NHLBI guidelines: Expert Panel on Integrated Guidelines for Cardiovascular Health and Risk Reduction in Children and Adolescents.

[c] Statin Therapy in People With HIV in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines states the following: "There are insufficient data to inform whether risk enhancers, such as HIV-related factors, would favor statin therapy among people under 40 years of age. However, some younger people with HIV may be at increased ASCVD risk—particularly those with a very long duration of HIV infection (e.g., due to perinatal exposure)."

Key to Symbol:
↑ = increase

Key: ALT = alanine aminotransferase; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; ASCVD = atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease; AST = aspartate aminotransferase; ATV = atazanavir; CK = creatine kinase; COBI = cobicistat; CYP3A4 = cytochrome P450 3A4; DRV = darunavir; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; EFV = efavirenz; ETR = etravirine; EVG/c = elvitegravir/cobicistat; FLP = fasting lipid profile; HDL-C = high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LDL-C = low-density lipoprotein cholesterol; LFT = liver function test; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NHLBI = National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; OATP1B1 = organic anion transporter polypeptide 1B1; PI = protease inhibitor; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TC = total cholesterol; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TG = triglycerides

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Table 17c. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Gastrointestinal Effects

Updated: June 27, 2024
Reviewed: June 27, 2024

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Nausea/ Vomiting	All ARV drugs, but most notably RTV-boosted PIs	Onset • Early Presentation • Nausea and emesis, both of which may be associated with anorexia and/or abdominal pain	Varies by ARV agent; generally <15%	Unknown	Instruct patient to take PIs with food. Monitor for weight loss and ARV adherence.	Reassure the patient that these adverse effects generally improve over time (usually in 6–8 weeks). Consider switching to ARV drugs with smaller tablet sizes (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents). Provide supportive care. In extreme or persistent cases, use antiemetics or switch to another ARV regimen.
Diarrhea	All ARV drugs, but most notably RTV-boosted PIs	Onset • Early Presentation • More frequent bowel movements and stools that are generally soft	Varies by ARV agent; generally <15%	Unknown	Monitor for weight loss and dehydration.	In prolonged or severe cases, exclude infectious or noninfectious (e.g., lactose intolerance) causes of diarrhea.

Table 17c. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Gastrointestinal Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
						Reassure patient that this adverse effect generally improves over time (usually in 6–8 weeks). Consider switching to another ARV regimen in persistent and severe cases. Treatment data in children are lacking; however, the following strategies may be useful when the ARV regimen cannot be changed: • Modifying the diet • Using bulk-forming agents (e.g., psyllium) • Using antimotility agents (e.g., loperamide) • Using crofelemer, which is approved by the FDA to treat ART-associated diarrhea in adults aged ≥18 years; no pediatric data are available.
Pancreatitis	Rare, but may occur with NRTIs or RTV-boosted PIs	Onset • Any time, usually after months of therapy	<2%	Use of concomitant medications that are associated with pancreatitis (e.g., TMP-SMX, pentamidine, ribavirin)	Measure serum amylase and lipase concentrations if persistent abdominal pain develops.	Discontinue offending agent and avoid reintroduction. Manage symptoms of acute episodes.

Table 17c. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Gastrointestinal Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		Presentation • Emesis, abdominal pain, and elevated amylase and lipase levels (asymptomatic hyperamylasemia or elevated lipase do not in and of themselves indicate pancreatitis)		Hypertriglyceridemia Advanced HIV infection Previous episode of pancreatitis Alcohol use		If pancreatitis is associated with hypertriglyceridemia, consider using interventions to lower TG levels.

Key: ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; RTV = ritonavir; TG = triglyceride; TMP-SMX = trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole

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Table 17d. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hematologic Effects

Updated: June 27, 2024
Reviewed: June 27, 2024

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Anemia[a]	ZDV	Onset • Variable; weeks to months after starting therapy Presentation *More Common* • Asymptomatic • Mild fatigue • Pallor • Tachypnea *Rare* • Congestive heart failure	Newborns Exposed to HIV • Severe anemia is uncommon but might be coincident with physiologic Hgb nadir. Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Anemia is two to three times more common with ZDV-containing regimens than with all other regimens.	Newborns Exposed to HIV • Premature birth is the most common risk factor. • *In utero* exposure to ZDV-containing regimens • Advanced maternal HIV • Neonatal blood loss • Combination ARV prophylaxis or presumptive HIV therapy, although no particular regimen has been identified as being worse than others. Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Underlying hemoglobinopathy (e.g., sickle cell disease, G6PD deficiency)	Newborns Exposed to HIV • Obtain CBC at birth. • Consider repeating CBC at 4 weeks for neonates who are at higher risk (e.g., those born prematurely or who are known to have low birth Hgb) and for neonates who receive ZDV beyond 4 weeks. Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Avoid using ZDV in children with severe anemia when alternative agents are available. • Obtain CBC as part of routine care (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).	Newborns Exposed to HIV • Anemia rarely requires intervention unless it is symptomatic or Hgb <7.0 g/dL. • ZDV administration can be limited to 4 weeks in low-risk neonates (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Discontinue non-ARV, marrow-toxic drugs, if feasible. • Treat coexisting iron deficiency, OIs, and malignancies. • For persistent, severe anemia that is thought to be associated with ARV drugs (typically macrocytic

Table 17d. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hematologic Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
				• Myelosuppressive drugs (e.g., TMP-SMX, rifabutin) • Iron deficiency • Advanced or poorly controlled HIV disease • OIs of the bone marrow • Malnutrition		anemia), switch to a regimen that does not contain ZDV.
Macrocytosis	ZDV	Onset • Within days or weeks of starting therapy Presentation • Asymptomatic, but MCV often is >100 fL • Sometimes associated with or may progress to anemia	>90% to 95% for all ages	None	No monitoring required—macrocytosis can be detected if CBC is obtained as part of routine care (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).	No management required.

Table 17d. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hematologic Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Neutropenia[a]	ZDV	Onset • Variable Presentation • Asymptomatic	Newborns Exposed to HIV • Rare Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • 2% to 4% of children on ARV drugs • Highest rates occur in children on ZDV-containing regimens	Newborns Exposed to HIV • *In utero* exposure to ARV drugs • Combination ARV prophylaxis, particularly ZDV plus 3TC and NVP Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Advanced or poorly controlled HIV infection • Myelosuppressive drugs (e.g., TMP-SMX, ganciclovir, hydroxyurea, rifabutin)	Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Obtain CBC as part of routine care.	Newborns Exposed to HIV • No established threshold for intervention; some experts would consider using an alternative NRTI for prophylaxis if ANC reaches <500 cells/mm^3. ZDV administration can be limited to 4 weeks in low-risk neonates (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV). Children With HIV Who Are Taking ARV Drugs • Discontinue non-ARV, marrow-toxic drugs, if feasible. • Treat coexisting OIs and malignancies. • In cases of persistent, severe neutropenia that is thought to be associated with ARV drugs, switch to a regimen that does not contain ZDV.

[a] HIV infection itself, OIs, and medications that are used to prevent OIs (e.g., TMP-SMX) can all contribute to anemia and neutropenia. Prolonged use of NVP with ZDV in three-drug regimens for the prevention of perinatal HIV transmission has been associated with increased rates of anemia and neutropenia in some, but not all, studies. The effects are of uncertain clinical significance and appear to be transient.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ANC = absolute neutrophil count; ARV = antiretroviral; CBC = complete blood count; fL = femtoliter; G6PD = glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase; g/dL = grams per deciliter; Hgb = hemoglobin; MCV = mean cell volume; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; OI = opportunistic infection; TMP-SMX = trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole; ZDV = zidovudine

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Table 17e. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hepatic Events

Updated: April 11, 2024
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Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Hepatitis	Most ARV drugs have been associated with hepatitis, but a strong association exists between hepatitis and the use of NVP and EFV. NVP, EFV, ABC, RAL, DTG, and MVC have been associated with hepatitis in the context of HSRs. NRTIs, especially ZDV, have been associated with lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis.	Onset • Acute toxic hepatitis occurs most commonly within the first few months of therapy, but it can occur later. • Steatosis presents after months or years of therapy. • Patients with HBV coinfection can experience a hepatitis flare with the initiation or withdrawal of 3TC, FTC, TDF, or TAF. A flare also can occur with the emergence of resistance to 3TC or FTC (especially if the patient is receiving only one anti-HBV agent). Note that TDF and TAF have high barriers to resistance when used to treat HBV.	Uncommon	HBV or HCV coinfection Underlying liver disease Use of other hepatotoxic medications and supplements (e.g., St. John's wort [*Hypericum perforatum*], chaparral [*Larrea tridentata*], germander [*Teucrium chamaedrys*]) Alcohol use Pregnancy Obesity Higher drug concentrations of PIs For NVP-Associated Hepatic Events in Adults • Female sex with pre-NVP CD4 count >250 cells/mm^3 • Male sex with pre-NVP CD4 count >400 cells/mm^3	Prevention • Avoid concomitant use of hepatotoxic medications. • In patients with elevated levels of hepatic enzymes (>5 times to 10 times ULN) or chronic liver disease, most clinicians would avoid NVP. Monitoring *For ARV Drugs Other than NVP* • Obtain AST and ALT levels at baseline and at least every 3–4 months thereafter[b]; monitor at-risk patients more frequently (e.g., those with HBV or HCV coinfection or elevated baseline AST and ALT levels).	Evaluate the patient for other infectious and noninfectious causes of hepatitis and monitor the patient closely. Asymptomatic Hepatitis • Potentially offending ARV drugs should be discontinued if ALT or AST level is >5 times ULN. Symptomatic Hepatitis • Discontinue all ARV drugs and other potentially hepatotoxic drugs. • If a patient experiences hepatitis that is attributed to NVP, NVP should be discontinued permanently.

Table 17e. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hepatic Events

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		• Hepatitis can be a manifestation of IRIS if it occurs early in therapy, especially in patients with HBV or HCV coinfection. Presentation • Asymptomatic elevation of AST and ALT levels • Symptomatic hepatitis with nausea, fatigue, and jaundice • Hepatitis may present in the context of HSR with rash, lactic acidosis, and hepatic steatosis.		• Population-specific HLA types[a]	*For NVP* • Obtain AST and ALT levels at baseline, at 2 weeks, and at 4 weeks, and then every 3 months.	• Consider viral causes of hepatitis: HAV, HBV, HCV, EBV, and CMV.

Table 17e. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Hepatic Events

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Indirect Hyperbilirubinemia	ATV	Onset • Within the first months of therapy Presentation • Can be asymptomatic or associated with jaundice • Levels of direct bilirubin can be normal or slightly elevated when levels of indirect bilirubin are very high. • Normal AST and ALT	In long-term follow-up, 9% of children who were receiving ATV had at least one total bilirubin level >5 times ULN, and 1.4% of children experienced jaundice.	None established	Monitoring • No ongoing monitoring is needed. • After an initial rise over the first few months of therapy, unconjugated bilirubin levels generally stabilize; levels can improve over time.	Isolated indirect hyperbilirubinemia is not an indication to stop ATV. Psychological impact of jaundice should be evaluated, and alternative agents should be considered. Jaundice can result in nonadherence, particularly in adolescents; this side effect should be discussed with patients.

[a] For example, HLA-DRB1*0101 in White people, HLA-DRB1*0102 in South African people, and HLA-B35 in Thai people and White people.

[b] Less frequent monitoring can be considered in children whose clinical status has been stable for >2 years to 3 years (see Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection).

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ALT = alanine transaminase; ARV = antiretroviral; AST = aspartate aminotransferase; ATV = atazanavir; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; CMV = cytomegalovirus; DTG = dolutegravir; EBV = Epstein-Barr virus; EFV = efavirenz; FTC = emtricitabine; HAV = hepatitis A virus; HBV = hepatitis B virus; HCV = hepatitis C virus; HLA = human leukocyte antigen; HSR = hypersensitivity reaction; IRIS = immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome; MVC = maraviroc; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; PI = protease inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ULN = upper limit of normal; ZDV = zidovudine

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Table 17f. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Insulin Resistance, Asymptomatic Hyperglycemia, and Diabetes Mellitus

Updated: April 11, 2023
Reviewed: June 27, 2024

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Insulin Resistance, Asymptomatic Hyperglycemia, and Diabetes Mellitus[a]	ZDV, LPV/r, and possibly other PIs and INSTIs	Onset • Weeks to months after beginning therapy Presentation • Asymptomatic fasting hyperglycemia (which sometimes occurs in the setting of lipodystrophy), metabolic syndrome, or growth delay • Symptomatic DM (rare)	Children • IR, 6% to 12% (incidence is higher during puberty, 20% to 30%) • IFPG, 0% to 7% • IGT, 3% to 4% • DM, 0.2 per 100 child-years	Risk Factors for Type 2 DM • Lipodystrophy • Metabolic syndrome • Family history of DM • High BMI (obesity)	Prevention • Lifestyle modification Monitoring • Monitor for signs of DM, change in body habitus, and acanthosis nigricans. • Obtain RPG levels at initiation of ART, 3–6 months after ART initiation, and yearly thereafter. • In patients with an RPG ≥140 mg/dL, obtain FPG after an 8-hour fast and consider referring the patient to an endocrinologist.	Counsel patient on lifestyle modification (e.g., implementing a diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol, trans fat, and refined sugars; increasing physical activity; ceasing smoking). Recommend that the patient consult with a dietician. If the patient is receiving ZDV, switch to TAF, TDF, or ABC. For Patients With Either an **RPG ≥200** mg/dL Plus Symptoms of DM or an **FPG ≥126** mg/dL • These patients meet diagnostic criteria for DM; consult an endocrinologist.

Table 17f. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Insulin Resistance, Asymptomatic Hyperglycemia, and Diabetes Mellitus

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
						For Patients With an FPG **of 100**–125 mg/dL • Impaired FPG suggests insulin resistance; consult an endocrinologist. For Patients With an FPG of **<100** mg/dL • This FPG is normal, but a normal FPG does not exclude IR. Recheck FPG in 6–12 months.

[a] IR, asymptomatic hyperglycemia, IFPG, IGT, and DM form a spectrum of increasing severity.

IR: Often defined as elevated insulin levels for the level of glucose observed.

IFPG: Often defined as an FPG of 100–125 mg/dL.

IGT: Often defined as an elevated 2-hour plasma glucose (PG) of 140–199 mg/dL in a 75-g oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) (or, if the patient weighs <43 kg, 1.75 g per kg of glucose up to a maximum of 75 g).

DM: Often defined as either an FPG ≥126 mg/dL, an RPG ≥200 mg/dL in a patient with hyperglycemia symptoms, a glycosylated hemoglobin (HgbA1c) of ≥6.5%, or a 2-hour PG ≥200 mg/dL in an OGTT.

However, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV does not recommend performing routine measurements of insulin levels, HgbA1c, or glucose tolerance without consulting an endocrinologist. These guidelines are instead based on the readily available RPG and FPG levels. The HgbA1c test may underestimate glycemia in people with HIV; it is not recommended for diagnosis and may present challenges for monitoring.

Key: ABC = abacavir; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; BMI = body mass index; DM = diabetes mellitus; FPG = fasting plasma glucose; IFPG = impaired fasting plasma glucose; IGT = impaired glucose tolerance; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; IR = insulin resistance; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; mg/dL = milligrams per deciliter; PI = protease inhibitor; RPG = random plasma glucose; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ZDV = zidovudine

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Table 17g. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lactic Acidosis

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Lactic Acidosis	NRTIs • ZDV • Less likely with 3TC, FTC, ABC, TAF, and TDF Other Drugs • See the Risk Factors and Prevention/ Monitoring columns for information regarding the toxicity of propylene glycol when LPV/r oral solution is used in neonates.	Onset • Generally, after years of exposure • A few cases have been reported shortly after initiation in people with underlying liver disease. Presentation • Lactic acidosis may be clinically asymptomatic. *Lactic Acidosis May Also Present With Insidious Onset of a Combination of Signs and Symptoms* • Generalized fatigue, weakness, and myalgias • Vague abdominal pain, weight loss, unexplained nausea, or vomiting	3TC, FTC, ABC, TAF, and TDF are less likely to induce clinically significant mitochondrial dysfunction than ZDV.	Adults • Female sex • High BMI • Chronic HCV infection • African American race • Coadministration of TDF with metformin • Overdose of propylene glycol • CD4 count <350 cells/mm^3 • Acquired riboflavin or thiamine deficiency • Possible pregnancy • Overdose in setting of renal insufficiency, including a case of ARV-associated new-onset renal insufficiency (TDF/FTC plus DRV/c)	Prevention • Due to the presence of propylene glycol as a diluent, LPV/r oral solution **should not be used** in preterm neonates or any neonate who has not attained a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks and a postnatal age of ≥14 days. • Monitor for clinical manifestations of lactic acidosis and promptly adjust therapy. Monitoring *Asymptomatic Patients* • Routine measurement of serum lactate **is not recommended**.	For Patients With Lactate 2.1–5.0 mmol/L (Confirmed With a Second Test) • Consider discontinuing all ARV drugs temporarily while conducting additional diagnostic work-up. For Patients With Lactate >5.0 mmol/L (Confirmed With a Second Test)[b] or >10.0 mmol/L (Any One Test) • Discontinue all ARV drugs. • Provide supportive therapy (e.g., IV fluids; some patients may require sedation and respiratory support to reduce oxygen demand and ensure adequate oxygenation of tissues).

Table 17g. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lactic Acidosis

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		• Dyspnea • Peripheral neuropathy Note: Patients may present with acute multiorgan failure (e.g., fulminant hepatic failure, pancreatic failure, respiratory failure).		Preterm Infants or Any Neonates Who Have Not Attained a Postmenstrual Age of 42 Weeks and a Postnatal Age of ≥14 Days • Exposure to propylene glycol, which is used as a diluent in LPV/r oral solution, because these newborns have a diminished ability to metabolize propylene glycol, which may lead to accumulation, increasing the risk of adverse events.	*Patients With Clinical Signs or Symptoms Consistent With Lactic Acidosis* • Obtain blood lactate level.[a] • Additional diagnostic evaluations should include serum bicarbonate, anion gap, and/or arterial blood gas; amylase and lipase; serum albumin; and hepatic transaminases.	Anecdotal (Unproven) Supportive Therapies • Administer bicarbonate infusions, THAM, high doses of thiamine and riboflavin, and oral antioxidants (e.g., L-carnitine, co-enzyme Q10, vitamin C). Following the resolution of clinical and laboratory abnormalities, resume therapy either with an NRTI-sparing regimen or a revised NRTI-containing regimen. Institute a revised NRTI-containing regimen with caution, using NRTIs that are less likely to induce mitochondrial dysfunction (i.e., ABC, TAF, TDF, FTC, or 3TC). Lactate should be monitored monthly for ≥3 months.

[a] Blood for lactate determination should be collected, without prolonged tourniquet application or fist clenching, into a pre-chilled, gray-top, fluoride-oxalate–containing tube and transported on ice to the laboratory to be processed within 4 hours of collection.

[b] Management can be initiated before receiving the results of the confirmatory test.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ARV = antiretroviral; BMI = body mass index; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; FTC = emtricitabine; HCV = hepatitis C virus; IV = intravenous; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; THAM = tris (hydroxymethyl) aminomethane; ZDV = zidovudine

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Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain

Updated: June 27, 2024
Reviewed: June 27, 2024

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Lipodystrophy (Fat Maldistribution) General Information	See below for specific associations.	Onset • Increase in trunk and limb fat is the first sign; peripheral fat wasting may not appear for 12–24 months after ART initiation.	Frequency is low (<5%) with current regimens.	• Genetic predisposition • Puberty • HIV-associated inflammation • Older age • Longer duration of ART • Body habitus	Prevention • Initiate a calorically appropriate low-fat diet and an exercise regimen. Monitoring • BMI measurement • Waist circumference and waist-hip ratio	• Physicians should perform a regimen review and consider changing the regimen when lipodystrophy occurs. • Improvement in fat maldistribution can vary following a regimen change. Improvement may occur after several months or years, or it may not occur at all.
Central Lipohypertrophy or Lipo-accumulation	Can occur in the absence of ART, but these conditions most often are associated with the use of PIs and EFV.	Presentation • Central fat accumulation with increased abdominal girth, which may include a dorsocervical fat pad (buffalo hump). Gynecomastia may occur in males, or breast hypertrophy may occur in females, particularly with the use of EFV.	Frequency is low (<5%) with current regimens.	• Obesity before initiation of therapy • Sedentary lifestyle	Prevention • Initiate a calorically appropriate low-fat diet and an exercise regimen. Monitoring • BMI measurement • Waist circumference and waist-hip ratio measurements	• Counsel patient on lifestyle modification and dietary interventions (e.g., maintaining a calorically appropriate diet that is low in saturated fats and simple carbohydrates and starting an exercise regimen, especially strength training). • Recommend smoking cessation (if applicable) to decrease future CVD risk.

Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
						• Consider using an INSTI instead of a PI or EFV, although some INSTIs may be associated with generalized weight gain (see below). Data Are Insufficient to Allow the Panel to Safely Recommend Use of Any of the Following Modalities in Children: • Recombinant human growth hormone • Growth hormone–releasing hormone • Metformin • Thiazolidinediones • Recombinant human leptin • Anabolic steroids • Liposuction

Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Facial/Peripheral Lipoatrophy	Most cases are associated with the use of ZDV, a thymidine analogue NRTI.	Presentation • Thinning of subcutaneous fat in the face, buttocks, and extremities, measured as a decrease in trunk/limb fat by DXA or triceps skinfold thickness. Preservation of lean body mass distinguishes lipoatrophy from HIV-associated wasting.	Frequency is low (<5%) with current regimens.	Underweight before ART initiation	Prevention • Limit the use of ZDV. Monitoring • Patient self-report and physical examination are the most sensitive methods of monitoring lipoatrophy.	• Replace ZDV with another NRTI when possible. Data Are Insufficient to Allow the Panel to Safely Recommend Use of Any of the Following Modalities in Children: • Injections of poly-L-lactic acid • Recombinant human leptin • Autologous fat transplantation • Thiazolidinediones
Weight Gain	Significant weight gain may occur with all ARV regimens, but it appears to be more pronounced with INSTIs (DTG, BIC, EVG, RAL) and TAF.	Onset • Gradual weight gain after initiating ARV drugs is common with all currently used regimens. The mechanism for weight gain is unclear and under investigation.	Rate of development of obesity is unclear.	In Infants and Children • Limited evaluation has demonstrated weight gain, but such observations have not been consistently attributable to specific ARVs In Adolescents • Female sex • Pre-treatment obesity	Prevention • Initiate a calorically appropriate low-fat diet and an exercise regimen. Monitoring • BMI measurement • Waist circumference and waist-hip ratio measurements	Counsel patient on lifestyle modifications and dietary interventions (e.g., maintaining a calorically appropriate healthy diet that is low in saturated fats and simple carbohydrates and starting an exercise regimen, especially strength training). Children with HIV and significant weight gain should be managed according to standard AAP recommendations for weight management.

Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
				In Adults • Low pre-treatment BMI • Older age • Female sex • Black race • Possible genetic polymorphisms		

Key: AAP = American Academy of Pediatrics; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; BIC = bictegravir; BMI = body mass index; CVD = cardiovascular disease; DTG = dolutegravir; DXA = dual energy X-ray absorptiometry; EFV = efavirenz; EVG = elvitegravir; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; the Panel = the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV; PI = protease inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; ZDV = zidovudine

See the archived version of Supplement III, February 23, 2009, Pediatric Guidelines on the Clinicalinfo website for a more complete discussion and reference list.

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Table 17i. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Nephrotoxic Effects

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Urolithiasis/ Nephrolithiasis	ATV DRV causes crystalluria, but it is not associated with nephrolithiasis.	Onset • Weeks to months after starting therapy Presentation • Crystalluria • Hematuria • Pyuria • Flank pain • Increased creatinine levels in some cases	ATV-related nephrolithiasis occurs in <10% of patients and has been reported after stopping ATV.	In adults, elevated urine pH (>5.7) The risk factors in children are unknown.	Prevention • Maintain adequate hydration. Monitoring • Obtain urinalysis at least every 6–12 months.	Provide adequate hydration and pain control. Consider using another ARV drug in place of ATV.
Renal Dysfunction	TDF	Onset • Variable; in adults, renal dysfunction may occur weeks to months after initiating therapy. • Hypophosphatemia appears at a median of 18 months. • Glucosuria may occur after 1 year of therapy. • Abnormal urine protein/osmolality ratio may be an early indicator.	Adults • Approximately 2% of adults experience increased serum creatinine levels. • Approximately 0.5% of adults experience severe renal complications.	Risk May Increase in Children With the Following Characteristics • Aged >6 years • Black race, Hispanic/Latino ethnicity • Advanced HIV infection	Monitor urine protein, urine glucose, and serum creatinine at 3- to 6-month intervals. Some Panel members routinely monitor serum phosphate levels in patients who are taking TDF.	If TDF is the likely cause, consider using an alternative ARV drug. TAF has significantly less renal toxicity than TDF. Changing from TDF to TAF may improve renal function and has been shown to be safe.

Table 17i. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Nephrotoxic Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		Presentation *More Common* • Increased serum creatinine levels, proteinuria, and normoglycemic glucosuria • Increased urinary protein/creatinine ratio and albumin/creatinine ratio • Hypophosphatemia, usually asymptomatic; may present with bone and muscle pain or muscle weakness *Less Common* • Renal failure, acute tubular necrosis, Fanconi syndrome, proximal renal tubulopathy, interstitial nephritis, and nephrogenic diabetes insipidus with polyuria	Children • Approximately 4% of children experience hypophosphatemia or proximal tubulopathy; frequency increases with prolonged TDF therapy and advanced HIV infection.	• Hypertension • Diabetes • Concurrent use of PIs (especially LPV/r) and preexisting renal dysfunction • Longer duration of TDF treatment • The presence of the apolipoprotein L1 variants G1 and G2 appears to increase the risk of renal abnormality in children with HIV. These alleles are more common in people of Black descent.	Measure serum phosphate if the patient experiences persistent proteinuria or glucosuria or has symptoms of bone pain, muscle pain, or weakness. Because toxicity risk increases with the duration of TDF treatment, do not decrease the frequency of monitoring over time.	

Table 17i. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Nephrotoxic Effects

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Elevation in Serum Creatinine	DTG, COBI, RPV, BIC	Onset • Within 1 month of starting treatment Presentation • Asymptomatic. These drugs decrease renal tubular secretion of creatinine, leading to an increase in serum creatinine levels without a true change in eGFR. • Clinicians need to distinguish between a true change in eGFR and other causes. A true change may be associated with other medical conditions, the continuing rise of serum creatinine levels over time, and albuminuria.	Common laboratory finding	In adults, baseline serum creatinine, male sex, TDF use, and possibly defined polymorphisms (UGT1A1). The risk factors in children are unknown.	Monitor serum creatinine. Assess for renal dysfunction if serum creatinine increases by >0.4 mg/dL or if increases continue over time.	No need to change therapy Reassure the patient about the benign nature of the laboratory abnormality.

Key: ARV = antiretroviral; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; COBI = cobicistat; DRV = darunavir; DTG = dolutegravir; eGFR = estimated glomerular filtration rate; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; Panel = the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV; PI = protease inhibitor; RPV = rilpivirine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; UGT1A1 = uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1

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Table 17j. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Osteopenia and Osteoporosis

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Osteopenia and Osteoporosis	Any ARV regimen Specific Agents of Concern • TDF, especially when used in a regimen that includes a boosting agent (i.e., RTV, COBI) • PIs (LPV, ATV>DRV) • EFV	Onset • Any age; decrease in BMD is usually seen soon after initiating ART. Presentation • Usually asymptomatic • Rarely presents as osteoporosis, a clinical diagnosis defined by evidence of bone fragility (e.g., a fracture with minimal trauma).	BMD Z-score Less than −2.0 • <10% in U.S. cohorts • Approximately 10% to 20% in international cohorts	Longer duration and greater severity of HIV disease Detectable viral load Vitamin D insufficiency/deficiency Delayed growth or pubertal delay Low BMI Lipodystrophy Smoking Prolonged systemic corticosteroid use Medroxyprogesterone use Lack of weight-bearing exercise	Prevention • Ensure that the patient has sufficient intake and levels of both calcium and vitamin D. • Encourage weight-bearing exercise. • Minimize modifiable risk factors (e.g., smoking, low BMI, use of steroids or medroxyprogesterone). • Use TAF instead of TDF whenever possible. • Use TDF with RPV or an unboosted INSTI. • When using TDF or EFV in a regimen, consider measuring vitamin D levels and supplementing with vitamin D3 if deficiency is identified.	Same options as for prevention Consider changing the ARV regimen (e.g., switching from TDF to TAF and/or from LPV/r to RPV or an unboosted INSTI whenever possible). Supplement with vitamin D3 to raise serum 25-OH-vitamin D concentrations to >30 ng/mL. There is no clear benefit to administering daily supplemental vitamin D3 doses that are >4,000 IU. If patients are receiving a daily dose of vitamin D3 that is >4,000 IU, consider monitoring levels of 25-OH-vitamin D. While an overall effect was not seen in a large trial of vitamin D supplementation in adolescents with HIV, an increase in BMD was seen in those adolescents with vitamin D deficiency.

Table 17j. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Osteopenia and Osteoporosis

					Monitoring • Assess nutritional intake (i.e., calcium, vitamin D, and total calories). • Consider measuring serum 25-OH-vitamin D levels, particularly in patients who are taking ARV drugs of concern.[a] • DXA is rarely indicated.[b]	An increase in BMD was seen in one trial that evaluated the use of alendronate in youth with HIV and low BMD. However, the role of bisphosphonates in managing osteopenia and osteoporosis in children with HIV has not been established.

[a] Drugs of greatest concern are TDF and EFV. Some experts measure 25-OH-vitamin D in children with HIV with additional risk factors, including living at high latitudes, sun avoidance, low dietary intake, and obesity.

[b] DXA scanning is not routinely recommended for children and youth who are being treated with TDF. DXA scanning can be considered for children and youth who are receiving additional medications that also affect bone density or have non-HIV-related conditions for which DXA scans may be indicated (e.g., cerebral palsy).

Key: 25-OH-vitamin D = 25-hydroxy vitamin D; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; ATV = atazanavir; BMD = bone mineral density; BMI = body mass index; COBI = cobicistat; DRV = darunavir; DXA = dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry; EFV = efavirenz; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; IU = international unit; LPV = lopinavir; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; PI = protease inhibitor; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

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Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Updated: September 30, 2025
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Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
Rash	Any ARV drug can cause rash.	Onset • First few days to weeks after starting new ARV drug(s) Presentation • Most rashes are mild-to-moderate diffuse maculopapular eruptions. Note: A rash can be the initial manifestation of systemic hypersensitivity (see the SJS/TEN/EM major and HSR sections below).	Common (>10%) • EFV • ETR • FTC • NVP Less Common (5% to 10%) • ABC • ATV • DRV • TDF Uncommon (2% to 4%) • BIC • LPV/r • MVC • RAL • RPV	• Sulfonamide allergy is a risk factor for rash in patients who are taking PIs that contain a sulfonamide moiety (i.e., DRV). • Polymorphisms in CYP2B6 and multiple HLA loci are associated with an increased risk of rash in patients who are taking NVP.	When Starting NVP or Restarting NVP After Interruptions of >14 Days • Utilize once-daily lead-in dosing.[a] This may not be necessary in children aged <2 years.[b] • Avoid the use of systemic corticosteroids during NVP dose escalation. • Assess the patient for rash severity, mucosal involvement, and other signs of systemic reaction.	Mild-to-Moderate Maculopapular Rash Without Systemic or Mucosal Involvement • Most rashes will resolve without intervention; ARV drugs can be continued while monitoring.[a] • Antihistamines may provide some relief. Severe Rash and/or Rash Accompanied by Systemic Symptoms • Manage as SJS/TEN/EM major, DRESS, or HSR, as applicable (see below). Rash in Patients Receiving NVP • Given the elevated risk of HSR, measure hepatic transaminases. • If hepatic transaminases are elevated, NVP **should be discontinued and not restarted** (see the HSR section below).

Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
SJS/TEN/EM Major	Many ARV drugs, especially NNRTIs (see the Estimated Frequency column)	Onset • First few days to weeks after starting new ARV drug(s) Presentation • Initial rash may be mild, but it often becomes painful, evolving to blister/bulla formation with necrosis in severe cases. Usually involves mucous membrane ulceration and/or conjunctivitis. • Systemic symptoms may also include fever, tachycardia, malaise, myalgia, and arthralgia.	Infrequent • NVP (0.3%) • EFV (0.1%) • ETR (<0.1%) Case Reports • ABC • ATV • DRV • LPV/r • RAL • ZDV	Adults • Female sex Patients who are Black, Asian, or Hispanic are at higher risk.	When Starting NVP or Restarting NVP After Interruptions of >14 Days • Utilize once-daily lead-in dosing.[a] This may not be necessary in children aged <2 years.[b] • Counsel families to report symptoms as soon as they appear.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs and other possible causative agents (e.g., TMP-SMX). • Provide intensive supportive care, including IV hydration, aggressive wound care, eye care, labial adhesion preventive care, pain management, and antipyretics. Parenteral nutrition and antibiotics may also be necessary. • Corticosteroids and/or IVIG are sometimes used, but the use of these interventions is controversial. • Do not reintroduce the offending medication. • In cases where a patient experiences SJS/TEN/EM major while taking an NNRTI, many experts would avoid using other NNRTIs when restarting ART.
DRESS	DRV, DTG, EFV, ETR, NVP, RAL, RPV, BIC	Onset • 1–8 weeks after starting new ARV drug(s) Presentation • Fever • Lymphadenopathy	Rare	• Unknown • Potential association with HLA-B*53:01 and RAL-induced DRESS	Obtain a CBC and AST, ALT, and creatinine levels from patients who present with suggestive symptoms.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs and other possible causative agents (e.g., TMP-SMX). • The role of systemic steroids or IVIG in treatment is unclear; consultation with a specialist is recommended.

Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		• Facial swelling • Morbilliform to polymorphous rash • Peripheral eosinophilia • Atypical circulating lymphocytes • Internal organ involvement (particularly the liver and/or kidneys)				• Provide supportive care for end-organ disease. • Do not reintroduce the offending medication.
HSR With or without skin involvement and excluding SJS/TEN	ABC	Onset *With First Use* • Within first 6 weeks of initiating ABC *With Reintroduction* • Within hours of initiating ABC Presentation • Symptoms include high fever, diffuse skin rash, malaise, nausea, headache, myalgia, arthralgia, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, pharyngitis, and respiratory symptoms (e.g., dyspnea).	<1% to 9% (varies by ethnicity)	• HLA-B*5701 (HSR is very uncommon in people who are HLA-B*5701 negative.) • The prevalence of HLA-B*5701 is generally lower in people from Africa and East Asia.	• Screen for HLA-B*5701. ABC should not be prescribed if HLA-B*5701 is present. The medical record should clearly indicate that ABC is contraindicated in these patients. • When starting ABC, counsel patients and families about the signs and symptoms of HSR to ensure prompt reporting of reactions.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs and investigate other causes of the symptoms (e.g., a concurrent viral illness). • Provide symptomatic treatment. • Most symptoms resolve within 48 hours after discontinuing ABC. • Do not rechallenge with ABC even if the patient is HLA-B*5701 negative.

Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
		• With continuation of ABC, symptoms may progress to hypotension and vascular collapse. With rechallenge, symptoms can mimic anaphylaxis.				
	NVP	Onset • Occurs most frequently in the first few weeks of therapy but can occur through 18 weeks. Presentation • Flu-like symptoms (including nausea, vomiting, myalgia, fatigue, fever, abdominal pain, and jaundice) with or without skin rash that may progress to hepatic failure with encephalopathy	Occurs in 4% of patients on average, with a range of 2.5% to 11%.	Adults • ARV-naive with a higher CD4 count (>250 cells/mm^3 in women; >400 cells/mm^3 in men) • Female sex (risk is threefold higher in females than in males) • Hepatitis B or hepatitis C infection Children • NVP hepatotoxicity and HSR are less common in prepubertal children than in adults, and both are uncommon in infants.	When Starting NVP or Restarting NVP After Interruptions of >14 Days • A 2-week lead-in period with once-daily dosing, followed by dose escalation to twice daily as recommended, may reduce the risk of reaction.[a] This may not be necessary in children aged <2 years.[b] • Counsel families about signs and symptoms of HSR to ensure prompt reporting of reactions.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs. • Consider other causes of hepatitis and discontinue all hepatotoxic medications. • Provide supportive care as indicated and monitor the patient closely. • Do not reintroduce NVP. It is unclear whether it is safe to use other NNRTIs after a patient experiences symptomatic hepatitis due to NVP, and many experts would avoid the NNRTI drug class when restarting treatment.

Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
				• High CD4 percentage is associated with an increased risk of NVP toxicity. In the PREDICT Study, the risk of NVP toxicity (rash, hepatotoxicity, and hypersensitivity) was 2.65 times greater in children who had CD4 percentages ≥15% than in children who had CD4 percentages <15%.	• Obtain AST and ALT levels in patients with rash. Obtain AST and ALT levels at baseline, before dose escalation, 2 weeks after dose escalation, and thereafter at 3-month intervals. • Avoid NVP use in women with CD4 counts >250 cells/mm^3 and in men with CD4 counts >400 cells/mm^3, unless benefits outweigh risks. • Do not use NVP as postexposure prophylaxis outside of the neonatal period.	
	ETR	Onset • Any time during therapy Presentation • Symptoms may include rash, constitutional findings, and sometimes organ dysfunction, including hepatic failure.	Rare	Unknown	Evaluate for hypersensitivity if the patient is symptomatic.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs. • Rechallenge with ETR is not recommended.

Table 17k. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Rash and Hypersensitivity Reactions

Adverse Effects	Associated ARVs	Onset/Clinical Manifestations	Estimated Frequency	Risk Factors	Prevention/ Monitoring	Management
	MVC	Rash preceding hepatotoxicity	Rare	Unknown	Obtain AST and ALT levels from patients with rash or other symptoms of hypersensitivity.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs. • Rechallenge with MVC is not recommended.
	DTG	Rash with hepatic dysfunction	Rare	Unknown	Obtain AST and ALT levels from patients with rash or other symptoms of hypersensitivity.	• Discontinue all ARV drugs. • Rechallenge with DTG is contraindicated.

[a] The prescribing information for NVP states that patients who experience rash during the 14-day lead-in period should not have the NVP dose increased until the rash has resolved. However, prolonging the lead-in phase beyond 14 days may increase the risk of NVP resistance because of subtherapeutic drug levels. Children who have persistent mild or moderate rash after the lead-in period should receive individualized care. Consult an expert in HIV care when managing these patients. NVP should be stopped and not restarted if the rash is severe or progressing. See the Nevirapine section of the Drug Appendix.

[b] Lead-in dosing is not recommended when using NVP for either presumptive or definitive HIV therapy in newborns with perinatal HIV exposure or perinatal HIV infection. See the Nevirapine section of the Drug Appendix and Table 13. Antiretroviral Management for Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV in Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.

Key: ABC = abacavir; ALT = alanine transaminase; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; AST = aspartate aminotransferase; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; CBC = complete blood count; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; CYP2B6 = cytochrome P450 family 2 subfamily B member 6; DRESS = drug reaction (or rash) with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms; DRV = darunavir; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; EM = erythema multiforme; ETR = etravirine; FTC = emtricitabine; HLA = human leukocyte antigen; HLA-B*53:01 = human leucocyte antigen gene variant; HLA-B*5701 = human leucocyte antigen gene variant; HSR = hypersensitivity reaction; IV = intravenous; IVIG = intravenous immune globulin; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; MVC = maraviroc; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; PI = protease inhibitor; PREDICT Study = Personalised Responses to Dietary Composition Trial Study; RAL = raltegravir; RPV = rilpivirine; SJS = Stevens-Johnson syndrome; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TEN = toxic epidermal necrolysis; TMP-SMX = trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole; ZDV = zidovudine

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Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy

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The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends all children with HIV initiate antiretroviral therapy (ART) and receive lifelong treatment. Nearly all children will experience antiretroviral (ARV) regimen changes at some point during their care. Providers may consider ARV regimen changes for the following reasons:

- *Treatment simplification:* Modifying ARV regimens in children who are currently receiving effective ART to simplify the regimen
- *Treatment optimization:* Increasing the treatment potency or barrier to resistance of an effective but older or potentially fragile regimen, improving the adverse-event profile, or addressing child or caregiver preferences
- *Toxicity management:* Recognizing and managing ARV drug toxicity or intolerance (see Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance)
- *Treatment failure:* Recognizing and managing treatment failure (see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure)

Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy

Panel's Recommendations
• Children who have sustained virologic suppression on their current antiretroviral (ARV) regimen should be evaluated regularly for opportunities to change to a new regimen that facilitates adherence, simplifies administration, increases ARV potency or barrier to drug resistance, and decreases the risk of drug-associated toxicity (AII). • Before changing a child's ARV regimen, clinicians must carefully consider the child's and caregiver's preferences, previous regimens, past episodes of ARV therapy failure, prior drug-resistance test results, drug cost, insurance coverage, and the child's ability to tolerate the new drug regimen (AIII). Archived drug resistance can limit the antiviral activity of a new drug regimen. • Children should be monitored carefully after a change in treatment. Viral load measurement is recommended 2 to 4 weeks after a change in a child's ARV regimen (BIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Clinicians choose initial ARV regimens for children with HIV by evaluating the pharmacokinetic (PK), safety, and efficacy data for the drugs that are available in formulations suitable for the child's age and weight at the start of treatment. New ARV drug options may become available as children grow and learn to swallow pills and as new drugs, drug formulations, and data become available. Even in cases wherein children have achieved sustained virologic suppression (i.e., suppression for 6–12 months) on their current regimen, clinicians should consider switching children to new ARV regimens to permit the use of pills instead of liquids; reduce pill burden; allow the use of once-daily medications; reduce the risk of adverse events; minimize drug interactions; and align a child's regimen with widely used, efficacious adult regimens.[1] These changes often enhance adherence and improve quality of life.[2] Useful principles to consider regarding switching ARV regimens in adults have been published but do not address children and adolescents.[3,4]

Treatment Simplification

Many infants and children with HIV[5] initiated treatment with twice-daily dosing (especially prior to the approval of integrase strand transfer inhibitor [INSTI] medications for pediatric use), and regimens included a variety of drug formulations, depending on which formulations were available for a child's age and weight. Clinicians should regularly review treatment options as children grow, and offer simplified dosing using coformulated drugs and/or once-daily regimens when appropriate (see Table 18 below). Clinicians also should consider the child's and caregiver's preferences, the child's ART history, drug-resistance test results, and ability to swallow tablets.

Fixed-Dose Combinations

Efforts to increase the availability of coformulated complete ARV regimens have yielded several once-daily options for children that should be considered. Among youth in the United States aged 13 to 24 years who do not have treatment experience, some evidence exists that single-tablet regimens (STRs) improve the odds of viral suppression[6]; emerging evidence also supports the safety, efficacy, and tolerability of STRs in younger children.[7-9] Although these data have not been replicated in treatment-experienced adolescents, clinicians should consider using STRs in children and youth with sustained viral suppression because these regimens reduce pill burden and dosing frequency. See Table 18 below for more information on once-daily options and other coformulated complete ARV regimens. [6-8,10]

The International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) 2019 study demonstrated safety, efficacy, and appropriate dosing of a fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablet containing abacavir, dolutegravir, and lamivudine (ABC/DTG/3TC) in children aged <12 years, with use of dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) or an immediate-release tablet (Triumeq) to be swallowed depending on the child's weight.[11] For children weighing ≥14 kg who can swallow pills, additional options include coformulated bictegravir, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide (BIC/FTC/TAF; Biktarvy) or FTC/TAF (Descovy) plus DTG, which is a two-pill, once-daily regimen. Additional coformulated options are available when children reach 25 kg to 35 kg in weight. See below for more information on once-daily options and other coformulated complete ARV regimens.

Fixed-Dose Combination Alternatives and Antiretroviral Dosing Frequency

If using an FDC once-daily regimen is not possible, clinicians should determine whether the child's ARV regimen could be simplified in other ways. For example, small studies have shown that children who achieve virologic suppression using twice-daily dosing for certain ARV drugs

(e.g., ABC) maintain virologic suppression when they are switched from twice-daily dosing to once-daily dosing of the same drugs (see the Abacavir and Nevirapine sections and FDCs in Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets: Minimum Body Weights and Consideration for Use in Children and Adolescents). However, these studies reported mixed results when switching the dosing for lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) from twice daily to once daily. Therefore, once-daily dosing of LPV/r **is not recommended for children aged <18 years.**[12-15]

Long-Acting Injectable Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine

Long-acting injectable (LAI) ARV medications may be considered a treatment simplification approach for some virologically suppressed adolescents. The co-packaged, two-drug injectable ARV regimen of cabotegravir and rilpivirine (CAB and RPV; Cabenuva) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children weighing ≥35 kg and aged ≥12 years, with viral suppression (defined as <50 copies/mL), on a stable ARV regimen, without a history of treatment failure, and without known or suspected drug resistance to either drug. Studies in adults—such as the First Long-Acting Injectable Regimen (FLAIR) and Antiretroviral Therapy as Long-Acting Suppression (ATLAS) trials—have demonstrated non-inferiority in those receiving monthly CAB and RPV injections compared with adults who stayed on a daily three-drug oral regimen.[16,17] Similarly, in the ATLAS-2M and SOLAR trials, injections of CAB and RPV every 2 months were found to be non-inferior to monthly injections and once-daily ART, respectively.[18,19] The IMPAACT 2017 study evaluated long-acting injectable CAB and RPV (LA CAB/RPV) in children aged 12 to 18 years. At 24 and 48 weeks of follow-up, injections of LA CAB/RPV every 2 months maintained viral suppression, showed acceptable PK, and demonstrated an acceptable safety profile in 144 adolescents.[20] Additionally, participating youth and their caregivers reported high acceptability of LA CAB/RPV and a strong preference for LAI ART over daily oral ART.[17] The Panel notes that questions remain, including whether there are additional adverse effects specific to the pediatric population, whether a two-drug nucleoside-sparing regimen for children with significant ARV treatment history[21] will demonstrate long-term efficacy, and what potential implementation challenges will emerge. A single site in the United States has reported on 25 adolescents and young adults receiving CAB and RPV, 7 of whom experienced viremia particularly while on bimonthly injections, which resolved for most participants with change to monthly injections.[22] No drug resistance emerged among those with viremia. Three of the individuals also experienced postinjection cytokine release syndrome that self-resolved.[23,24] However, given the FDA approval for those as young as 12 years of age, some providers may consider injectable CAB and RPV in adolescents who meet the approved indications and may benefit from an LAI regimen. See the Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine sections for additional information about these drugs and the dosing and administration of CAB and RPV, and see Optimizing Antiretroviral Therapy in the Setting of Viral Suppression in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines for practical considerations.

Two-Drug Regimens

Oral two-drug regimens have shown efficacy in both pediatric and adult populations. DTG/3TC (Dovato) has demonstrated efficacy in adults and established safety and PK properties in adolescents with HIV. For adults, DTG/3TC was non-inferior to continuation of three- or four-drug regimens in treatment-experienced adults and those without a history of treatment failure in the TANGO and SALSA studies, respectively.[25,26] In the ongoing DANCE study, DTG/3TC is being evaluated as an initial regimen in adolescents who are ART-naive aged 12 to <18 years and weighing

≥25 kg and with HIV RNA of 1,000 copies/mL to ≤500,000 copies/mL. Safety and efficacy of DTG/3TC were comparable to adults, and 22 of 32 participants achieved viral suppression at 96 weeks.[27] Based on these findings, the FDA has approved DTG/3TC in adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥25 kg as an initial regimen or for those on a stable ART regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known drug resistance to the individual drugs. Although DTG/3TC is currently FDA restricted to those without drug resistance to DTG or 3TC, a meta-analysis of randomized and non-interventional ("real-world") studies suggests there may be minimal impact of the common M184V/I mutation on virologic response to DTG/3TC. DTG/3TC is not currently approved by the FDA for use in children with HIV <12 years of age. Cases of younger children who are able to maintain viral suppression on DTG/3TC have been reported. DTG/3TC is also being studied in children aged 2 years to <12 years with preliminary PK data demonstrating appropriate drug levels in this age group. However, sufficient data are not available yet to recommend this regimen in children aged <12 years.[28,29] The Panel does not recommend two-drug regimens for initial ART in children (see What to Start).

A two-drug FDC tablet containing DTG/RPV—a nucleoside-sparing, dual-therapy regimen that is marketed as Juluca—is approved by the FDA as a complete regimen to replace the current ARV regimen in adults who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months and who have no history of treatment failure. This approval was based on two Phase 3 clinical trials, SWORD-1 and SWORD-2, in which treatment-experienced adults who were virologically suppressed on three- or four-drug regimens were randomized either to switch to DTG/RPV (early-switch group) or stay on their original regimens through 48 weeks and then switch to DTG/RPV (late-switch group). Results from these trials showed similar rates of virologic suppression in both groups (non-inferiority) through 3 years of follow-up.[30-32] No equivalent data exist for this drug combination in children, although a clinical trial is underway in children aged 6 to 12 years. The Panel usually endorses the use of adult formulations in adolescents, and this product may be appropriate for certain adolescents. DTG/RPV regimens could be useful in adolescents in whom there is concern for toxicity from nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs).

Additionally, findings from the PENTA-17 SMILE study evaluating darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) combined with an INSTI, including 318 children aged 6 to 18 years in 11 countries, found that DRV/r plus an INSTI was non-inferior to the standard of care in maintaining virologic suppression at 48 weeks in participants without INSTI or protease inhibitor (PI) resistance.[33] However, the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines do not recommend DRV/r plus raltegravir (RAL) due to the higher rate of virologic failure in people with RNA >100,000 copies/mL, as well as the low genetic barrier to resistance of RAL and the high pill burden. Although the Panel does not recommend this combination for initial treatment, it might be considered in select situations in which avoidance of NRTIs is desired. DRV/r with 3TC is not recommended for adults or children due to need for PK booster resulting in potential for drug interventions and lack of published clinical trial data (see What to Start in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines).

Treatment Optimization

The aims of treatment optimization may include improving the potency of the regimen, improving a child's growth or other health outcomes through reduced drug side effects and/or better treated HIV, removing food requirements, or maximizing palatability. More studies are directly evaluating treatment optimization in children, and early results support the safety and efficacy of regimen

switches for those with viral suppression.[34-38] INSTI drugs have demonstrated higher efficacy and improved safety profiles compared to non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) or PIs. INSTI-based ART regimens are *Preferred* initial regimens for infants, children, and adolescents; thus, optimization to an INSTI-based regimen for eligible children and adolescents should be offered. Findings from the randomized, controlled Once-daily DTG-based ART in Young people vS. Standard thErapY (ODYSSEY) study of more than 700 children aged <18 years in eight countries initiating DTG as first- or second-line therapy showed superior virologic and clinical outcomes in children randomized to optimization with DTG-based ART compared with those in the standard of care (PI- or NNRTI-based regimens), contributing to evidence supporting optimization with DTG-based regimens.[39] Results from the younger ODYSSEY cohort of children weighing between 3 kg and 14 kg also showed superiority of DTG-based ART compared with other regimens, more than 70% of which were PI-based regimens.[40] Additionally, several observational studies in sub-Saharan Africa that are evaluating efforts to optimize pediatric ARV regimens have shown improved viral suppression rates in children that were switched to DTG-based regimens.[41-44]Similarly, a retrospective study from six African countries reporting on 7,898 children and adolescents aged 0 to ≤19 years demonstrated that 93% remained virologically suppressed after switching from NNRTI- and PI-based regimens to DTG-based regimens, and nearly 80% of those previously unsuppressed achieved viral suppression while on DTG.[45]The INSTI-based FDC regimen BIC/FTC/TAF also has shown efficacy and high rates of long-term viral suppression in adolescents and children ≥2 years and weighing 14 kg to <25 kg and is being evaluated as a tablet for oral suspension for use in infants as young as 1 month of age and weighing 6 kg to 14 kg.[46,47] A switch study in adults demonstrated similar efficacy and safety of BIC/FTC/TAF and DTG-based ART at 96 weeks.[48] Similarly, EVG/cobicistat/FTC/TAF has shown efficacy in adolescents. Early results from small, nonrandomized studies also show potential for switches to newer-generation NNRTI medications—such as RPV[49]and doravirine (DOR)[50] in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg who have been virologically suppressed on a stable ARV regimen.

For children and adolescents who are not able to use INSTI-based ART, older studies have demonstrated sustained viral suppression and improved growth outcomes in young children with good adherence and no baseline resistance who were switched from LPV/r-based regimens to an efavirenz (EFV)-based regimen (NEVEREST 3).[34-36] The IMPAACT 2014 study in adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years and weighing ≥45 kg showed that switching to the FDC DOR/3TC/tenofovir disoproxil (TDF) resulted in maintained suppression up to 96 weeks for those without documented drug resistance to any of the individual drugs.[50] Therefore, although replacing LPV/r with EFV may provide some benefits (e.g., once-daily dosing and a different side-effect profile), most pediatric HIV experts would prefer replacing LPV/r with an INSTI (*Preferred* as noted above), another boosted PI (e.g., darunavir [DRV] or atazanavir), or a newer-generation NNRTI if drug resistance is not an issue [e.g., DOR or RPV]), based on studies in adults and emerging evidence of non-inferiority or superiority in children.[37,38]

Toxicity Management

Several studies of small cohorts of children have demonstrated sustained virologic suppression and reassuring safety outcomes when drugs that have greater long-term toxicity risks are replaced with drugs that are thought to have lower toxicity risks (e.g., replacing TDF or zidovudine with TAF or ABC; replacing PIs and NNRTIs with INSTIs). For example, adolescents who were switched from

EFV to RPV, a newer generation of NNRTIs, showed similar rates of viral suppression with improved metabolic profiles and cognitive outcomes.[49] Additionally, studies in adults have shown improved tolerability, lipid profiles, and insulin sensitivity in adults who were switched from PIs to INSTIs,[51-55] and adults who were switched from EFV to an INSTI have shown improvement in neuropsychiatric symptoms. One study in South Africa showed that prevalence of hepatic steatosis decreased from 17% to 3% among 30 adolescents who switched to a DTG-containing regimen but increased from 8% to 16% among 38 adolescents who continued a non-DTG-containing regimen. Additionally, cholesterol and triglycerides were lower in those who switched to DTG and in whom no excess weight gain was observed.[56] In other studies, however, the use of INSTIs, as well as TAF, has been associated with weight gain in adults and adolescents, with emerging data showing an association in children.[57-61] Finally, NRTI-sparing regimens, including the dual-drug oral regimens (DRV and an INSTI or DTG/RPV) and the approved LAI regimen (CAB with RPV) described above, may be considered in people with NRTI toxicity who otherwise are eligible for these complete ARV regimens. In a small subgroup analysis of the SWORD study, participants who switched to DTG/RPV experienced small but statistically significant improvement in bone mineral density and bone turnover markers compared with those who continued on TDF.[62] Of note, however, is that, although small in number, more participant adverse events that led to discontinuation were reported in the DTG/RPV arm (3%) than in the arm in which participants stayed on their current regimen (<1%).[30]

Treatment Failure

Treatment failure is another common reason providers change ARV regimens in children with HIV. This topic is covered in Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure.

Regimens That Are Not Recommended for Use in Children

Monotherapy PI regimens (DRV/r, LPV/r, atazanavir/ritonavir)[63,64] and monotherapy regimens of DTG[65,66] have been used to simplify or reduce the toxicity of regimens in adults who have sustained virologic suppression, but with varying success. A study of LPV/r monotherapy used to simplify treatment regimens in virologically suppressed children in Thailand on dual-PI regimens showed that only 22 of 40 children on monotherapy maintained viral suppression at 144 weeks.[67] These strategies are still being explored, but data remain limited. At this time, monotherapy in virally suppressed children and adolescents is not a recommended treatment simplification strategy.[64,67-70]

Potential Antiretroviral Drug Switches in Children With Virologic Suppression

Table 18 below contains examples of potential ARV drug changes in children with sustained virologic suppression on their current regimen for the purpose of treatment simplification, optimization, or reduced toxicity. When considering such a change, a clinician should first ensure that a recent viral load test indicates that the child is not experiencing virologic failure and that the child has a reliable history of good adherence (assessed by self and caregiver report, pharmacy refill, prior viral loads, etc.). Clinicians also must consider ART history, tolerability, ability to swallow tablets, and all prior drug-resistance test results to avoid choosing new ARV drugs for which archived drug resistance would reemerge and limit the activity of the regimen.[71-75] The evidence that supports many of these ARV changes is indirect (i.e., extrapolated from data about drug performance during initial therapy or follow-up therapy after treatment failure). When such changes are made,

careful monitoring (e.g., taking a viral load measurement 2–4 weeks after making the switch to the new regimen) is important to ensure that virologic suppression is maintained.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression

This list is not exhaustive and does not necessarily contain all potential treatment options. Instead, it provides examples of changes that could be made. The table includes information only about switching between ARV drugs; **it does not include all the information that clinicians should consider before prescribing these drugs, such as child and caregiver preferences, drug cost, and the child's insurance coverage.** Refer to the individual drug sections; Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-Packaged Formulation, by Drug Class; and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for further information about the use and administration of specific ARV drugs and FDC formulations.

For images of most of the ARV drugs listed in this table, see the Antiretroviral Medications section of the National HIV Curriculum. In addition, a resource from the United Kingdom illustrates the relative sizes of individual ARV drug FDC tablets (see the ARV Chart in HIV i-Base). Although most of the drugs listed in that chart are the same as those in the United States, not all formulations available in the United States are included, and there are differences in a few of the brand names.

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
NRTIs			
ABC Twice Daily	Aged ≥3 months[b]	ABC once daily	See the Abacavir[b] section for more information.
3TC Twice Daily	Aged ≥3 years	3TC once daily	See the Lamivudine section for more information.
	Any age (starting at full-term birth) Any weight	FTC once daily	See the Emtricitabine section for more information.
ZDV	Aged ≥1 month[b]	ABC	Less long-term mitochondrial toxicity Children aged ≥3 months can take ABC once daily.
	Weighing 17 kg to <25 kg	TDF	TDF is a reasonable, once-daily option for HLA-B*5701-positive children for whom ABC is not recommended and in whom ZDV is not tolerated. TDF is available as an oral powder and as low-strength tablets alone or in combination with FTC.
	Weighing ≥14 kg	TAF[c]	Less long-term mitochondrial toxicity. Once-daily dosing. Only available in coformulation with other ARV drugs; can further reduce pill burden. TAF is preferred over TDF because of the lower risk of bone and renal toxicity, but it may be associated with weight gain and lipid abnormalities.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Weighing ≥14 kg	FTC/TAF[c] (Descovy)	Once-daily dosing. This combination NRTI medication may be more desirable because of smaller pill size and reduced pill burden. Benefits as described for TAF.
Any NRTI	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	NRTI-sparing regimen. Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	DTG/RPV (Juluca)	NRTI-sparing FDC that is a complete regimen. In addition to age and weight criteria (based on RPV component because DTG was approved for younger ages/lower weights), must be virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months and without history of treatment failure. Should be taken with food. No pediatric data.
NNRTIs			
NVP or EFV	Any age (starting at full-term birth) Weighing ≥2 kg	RAL[d]	RAL is preferred over NVP in infants from birth to age 4 weeks who weigh ≥2 kg. Both are dosed twice daily in children. Note that DTG and BIC have a higher barrier to resistance than RAL. In a child >1 month of age, DTG is preferred. See DTG below.
	Age ≥4 weeks Weighing ≥3 kg	DTG	DTG is available as a single drug in dispersible and film-coated tablet formulations, or as part of an FDC tablet, all of which can be dosed once daily if no documented resistance or history of failure with INSTI agents exists. DTG plus FTC/TAF (Descovy) in children weighing ≥14 kg or the weight-appropriate dose of FTC/TDF (Truvada) can be used in children weighing 20 kg to <25 kg. DTG is available as a component of the FDC ABC/DTG/3TC, which is a complete ARV regimen that can be given to infants and children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg in dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) and to children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg in a single tablet to be swallowed (Triumeq). Higher barrier to resistance, which makes it a good choice for children who have poor adherence. May improve lipid levels. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥3 months Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg	ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq PD)	Once-daily dosing. Dispersible tablets with dosage for use in children based on weight. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Aged ≥3 months Weighing ≥5 kg	ATV/r	ATV/r has a potentially greater barrier to resistance; however, taking ATV/r may be difficult for some children, as ATV oral powder must be mixed with food or a beverage before administration, and the palatability of the RTV oral solution is poor.
	Aged ≥3 years Weighing ≥10 kg Weighing ≥40 kg	DRV/r DRV/c as Symtuza	DRV/r has a potentially greater barrier to resistance. DRV/r is administered twice daily to children aged <12 years but may be administered once daily in children aged ≥12 years who do not have any DRV resistance mutations. DRV/c is available in FDC tablet with FTC/TAF for those weighing ≥40 kg. Must be administered with food. Note that the palatability of the RTV oral solution is poor when considering administering to children not able to swallow tablets.
	Weighing ≥14 kg	BIC as Biktarvy	Once-daily dosing. BIC is available as a component of the FDC tablet BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) in two weight-based dose formulations—one formulation for those weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for those weighing ≥25 kg. This is a complete ARV regimen that can be taken with or without food.
	Weighing ≥25 kg	EVG as Genvoya	EVG is available as a component of the FDC tablet EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya), which is a complete ARV regimen that must be taken with food.
	Weighing ≥35 kg	DOR	DOR is available in a once-daily FDC tablet DOR/3TC/TDF (Delstrigo). Fewer side effects than reported with EFV. It has continued activity in the setting of some NNRTI mutations.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	RPV	Lower incidence of adverse lipid effects. May have fewer sleep disturbances and neuropsychiatric symptoms compared to EFV. RPV has continued activity in the setting of some NNRTI mutations.
PIs			
LPV/r Twice Daily	Any age (starting at full-term birth) Weighing ≥2 kg	RAL[d]	Better palatability. RAL HD can only be given once daily in those weighing ≥40 kg. Unlike LPV/r, the use of RAL is not restricted to infants with a corrected gestational age of ≥42 weeks and a postnatal age of ≥14 days. RAL granules may be difficult to dose for some caregivers.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Age ≥4 weeks Weighing ≥3 kg	DTG	Once-daily dosing if no documented resistance or history of failure with INSTI agents exists. May be better tolerated, and it can be given as a dispersible tablet in young children. DTG is available as a component of the FDC ABC/DTG/3TC, which is a complete ARV regimen that can be given to infants and children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg in dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) and to children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg in a single tablet to be swallowed (Triumeq). DTG plus FTC/TAF (Descovy) in those weighing ≥14 kg, or the weight-appropriate dose of FTC/TDF (Truvada) can be used in children weighing 20 kg to <25 kg. May improve lipid levels. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥3 months Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg	ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq PD)	Once-daily dosing. Dispersible tablets with dosage for use in children based on weight. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥3 years Weighing ≥10 kg	EFV	Once-daily dosing. Better palatability. Lower incidence of adverse lipid effects. Review NNRTI mutations before use. See the Efavirenz section for concerns about EFV dosing for children aged <3 years.
	Aged ≥3 months Weighing ≥5 kg	ATV/r	Once-daily dosing. ATV/r may have a lower incidence of adverse lipid effects; however, taking ATV/r may be difficult for some children, as ATV oral powder must be mixed with food or a beverage before administration, and the palatability of the RTV oral solution is poor.
	Aged ≥3 years Weighing ≥10 kg Weighing ≥40 kg	DRV/r DRV/c as Symtuza	DRV/r may have a lower incidence of adverse lipid effects. DRV/r is administered twice daily to children aged <12 years, but it may be administered once daily in children aged ≥12 years who do not have DRV resistance mutations. DRV/c is available in FDC tablet with FTC/TAF for those weighing ≥40 kg. Must be administered with food. Note that palatability of the RTV oral solution is poor when considering administering to children not able to swallow tablets.
	Weighing ≥14 kg	BIC as Biktarvy	Once-daily dosing. BIC is available as a component of the FDC tablet BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) in two weight-based dose formulations—one for those weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for those weighing ≥25 kg. This is a complete ARV regimen that can be taken with or without food.
	Weighing ≥25 kg	EVG as Genvoya	EVG is available as a component of the FDC tablet EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya), which is a complete ARV regimen that must be taken with food.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Weighing ≥35 kg	DOR	DOR is available in a once-daily FDC tablet DOR/3TC/TDF (Delstrigo). Fewer side effects than reported with EFV. It has continued activity in the setting of some NNRTI mutations.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	RPV	May be better tolerated. Lower incidence of adverse lipid effects. It has continued activity in the setting of some NNRTI mutations.
INSTIs			
RAL	Age >1 month and weighing <14 kg Weighing ≥14 kg	DTG DTG or BIC	Once-daily dosing. Higher barrier to resistance. DTG is available as a single drug in a dispersible tablet for infants and children weighing ≥3 kg; in a dispersible FDC for children weighing ≥6 kg to 25 kg; in a single-drug film-coated tablet for children weighing ≥14 kg; or as an FDC tablet. All of these can be dosed once daily if no documented resistance or history of failure with INSTI agents exists. DTG plus FTC/TAF (Descovy) in those weighing ≥14 kg or the weight-appropriate dose of FTC/TDF (Truvada) can be used in children weighing 20 kg to <25 kg. DTG is available as a component of the FDC ABC/DTG/3TC, which is a complete ARV regimen that can be given to infants and children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg in dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) and to children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg in a single tablet to be swallowed (Triumeq). See the Dolutegravir section for more information. BIC has once-daily dosing and a higher barrier to resistance. BIC is available as a component of the FDC tablet BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) in two weight-based dose formulations—one for those weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for those weighing ≥25 kg. This is a complete ARV regimen that can be taken with or without food.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
EVG/c	Weighing ≥14 kg	DTG or BIC	Once-daily dosing. Higher barrier to resistance. DTG is available as a single drug in a dispersible tablet for infants and children weighing ≥3 kg; in a dispersible FDC for children weighing ≥6 kg to 25 kg; in a single-drug film-coated tablet for children weighing ≥14 kg; or as an FDC tablet. All of these can be dosed once daily if no documented resistance or history of failure with INSTI agents exists. DTG plus FTC/TAF (Descovy) in those weighing ≥14 kg or the weight-appropriate dose of FTC/TDF (Truvada) can be used in children weighing 20 kg to <25 kg. DTG is available as a component of the FDC ABC/DTG/3TC), which is a complete ARV regimen that can be given to infants and children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg in dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) and to children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg in a single tablet to be swallowed (Triumeq), See the Dolutegravir section for more information. BIC has once-daily dosing and a higher barrier to resistance. BIC is available as a component of the FDC tablet BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) in two weight-based dose formulations—one for those weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for those weighing ≥25 kg. This is a complete ARV regimen that can be taken with or without food.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.
Other			
Any Multi-Pill and/or Twice-Daily Regimen	Aged ≥3 months Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg	ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq PD)	Once-daily dosing. Dispersible tablets with dosage for use in children based on weight. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Weighing ≥14 kg	FTC/TAF[c] (Descovy) plus DTG	Once-daily dosing. This regimen may be more desirable because of smaller pill sizes, but it has a higher pill burden (two pills instead of one). Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Weighing ≥14 kg	BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill that can be taken with or without food. Available in two weight-based dose formulations—one for those weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for those weighing ≥25 kg.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Weighing ≥25 kg	ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill to be swallowed. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. Large pill size may be a deterrent. See the Dolutegravir section for more information.
	Weighing ≥25 kg	EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill. Alignment with adult ARV regimens. Must be taken with food.
	Weighing ≥35 kg	DOR/3TC/TDF (Delstrigo)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. Must be taken with food at a consistent time daily. Renal and bone toxicity of TDF limit its use. Review NNRTI mutations and check for drug–drug interactions before use.
	Weighing ≥35 kg SMR 4 or 5	EVG/c/FTC/TDF (Stribild)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. Must be taken with food. Renal and bone toxicity of TDF limit its use.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	CAB and RPV co-packaged regimen as Cabenuva	Long-acting injectable, complete ARV regimen requiring two IM injections every 1 to 2 months that together are an alternative to daily oral ARV regimens. Must consider prior history of treatment failure and known or suspected drug resistance to individual drugs. Injection site reactions are common but do not often result in discontinuation of the regimen. See the Cabotegravir section for more information.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥25 kg	FTC/RPV/TAF (Odefsey)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. Review NNRTI mutations and check for drug–drug interactions before use. Must be taken with food at a consistent time daily.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg SMR 4 or 5	FTC/RPV/TDF (Complera)	Once-daily dosing. Single pill. Aligns a child's regimen with an efficacious regimen that is used in adults. Review NNRTI mutations and check for drug–drug interactions before use. Must be taken with food at a consistent time daily. Renal and bone toxicity of TDF limit its use.
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥35 kg	DTG/RPV (Juluca)	NRTI-sparing FDC that is a complete regimen. In addition to age and weight criteria (based on RPV component because DTG is approved for younger ages/lower weights), must be virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months and without history of treatment failure. Should be taken with food. No pediatric data.
	Weighing ≥40 kg	DRV/c/FTC/TAF (Symtuza)	Once daily FDC tablet that is a complete regimen in children who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months with no known mutations associated with resistance to DRV or tenofovir. Must be taken with food.

Table 18. Examples of Changes in Antiretroviral Regimen Components for Children with Sustained Virologic Suppression

Current ARV Drug(s)	Age, Weight, and Sexual Maturity Rating Requirements	Potential ARV Drug Switch[a]	Comment
	Aged ≥12 years Weighing ≥25 kg	DTG/3TC (Dovato)	Once-daily, two-drug complete regimen approved in adolescents and adults with no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components who are either ART-naive or who are virologically suppressed on a stable ART regimen with no history of treatment failure. Because adolescents may have difficulties adhering to therapy, close monitoring with viral load testing is recommended.

[a] The possibility of planned and unplanned pregnancy should be considered when selecting an ART regimen for an adolescent. When discussing ART options with adolescents and their caregivers, it is important to consider childbearing potential and the benefits and risks of all ARV drugs and to provide the information and counseling needed to support informed decision-making; refer to the Perinatal Guidelines (see Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs During Pregnancy, Table 7. Situation-Specific Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs During Pregnancy and When Trying to Conceive, and Appendix C. Antiretroviral Counseling Guide for Health Care Providers).

[b] For infants and young children who are being treated with liquid formulations of ABC, initiation with once-daily ABC is not generally recommended. In clinically stable infants and children with undetectable viral loads who have had stable CD4 T lymphocyte cell counts on twice-daily ABC, the dose can be changed from twice daily to once daily in those aged ≥3 months. ABC is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in neonates and infants aged <3 months. Data from the IMPAACT P1106 trial and two observational cohorts provide reassuring evidence of the safety of ABC in infants aged <3 months. Based on these data, clinicians may consider the use of twice daily ABC in infants aged ≥1 month to <3 months, in consultation with a pediatric HIV specialist (see the Abacavir section for more information).

[c] For children and adolescents weighing ≥14 kg to <35 kg, TAF can be used in combination with an INSTI or an NNRTI, but not a boosted PI. For children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg, TAF can be used in combination with an INSTI, NNRTI, or boosted PI.

[d] RAL is recommended for twice-daily use in children. Chewable tablets can be used as dispersible tablets starting at 4 weeks of age. RAL HD once daily is only recommended for virologically suppressed children weighing ≥40 kg.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; ATV = atazanavir; ATV/r = atazanavir/ritonavir; BIC = bictegravir; CAB = cabotegravir; DOR = doravirine; DRV = darunavir; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; EVG = elvitegravir; EVG/c = elvitegravir/cobicistat; FDC = fixed-dose combination; FTC = emtricitabine; HD = high dose; HLA = human leukocyte antigen; IM = intramuscular; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NVP = nevirapine; PI = protease inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; SMR = sexual maturity rating; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ZDV = zidovudine

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Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure

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Panel's Recommendations
• The causes of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment failure—which include poor adherence, drug resistance, poor absorption of medications, inadequate dosing, and drug–drug interactions—should be assessed and addressed (AII). • Perform ARV drug-resistance testing when virologic failure occurs, while the child is still taking the failing regimen (AI*) (see Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines for more information). • New ARV regimens should be chosen based on treatment history and drug-resistance testing, including both past and current resistance test results (AI*). o The new regimen should include preferably two or three fully active ARV medications; the assessment of anticipated ARV activity should be based on treatment history and past resistance test results (AI*). o When using a new regimen with only two fully active ARV medications, at least one should have a high barrier to resistance (i.e., second-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitor [INSTI] or boosted protease inhibitor [PI]) (AI*). See the Therapeutic Options to Achieve Complete Virologic Suppression After Virologic Failure section below for recommended regimens, as some ARVs, such as zidovudine, are not recommended in this scenario. o If two fully active ARV medications are not available, at least one fully active medication with high barrier to resistance (i.e., second-generation INSTI, boosted PI) should be used plus two partially active nucleos(t)ide reverse transcriptase inhibitors, (i.e., tenofovir disoproxil fumarate or tenofovir alafenamide with lamivudine (3TC) or emtricitabine; abacavir and 3TC). In this case, frequent viral load monitoring is recommended for early detection of virologic failure (BI). • The goal of therapy following treatment failure is to achieve and maintain virologic suppression, which is defined as a plasma viral load that is below the limits of detection as measured by highly sensitive assays with lower limits of quantification of 20 copies/mL to 75 copies/mL (AI*). • When complete virologic suppression cannot be achieved, the goals of therapy are to preserve or restore immunologic function (as measured by CD4 T lymphocyte cell values), prevent clinical disease progression, and prevent the development of additional drug resistance that could further limit future ARV drug options (AII). • Children who require evaluation and management of treatment failure should be managed by or in collaboration with a pediatric HIV specialist (AIII).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Categories of Treatment Failure

Treatment failure can be categorized as virologic failure, immunologic failure, clinical failure, or some combination of the three. Immunologic failure refers to a suboptimal immunologic response to

therapy or an immunologic decline while on therapy, but no standardized definition exists. Clinical failure is defined as the occurrence of new opportunistic infections (OIs) (excluding immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome [IRIS]) and/or other clinical evidence of HIV disease progression during therapy. Almost all antiretroviral (ARV) management decisions for treatment failure are based on addressing virologic failure.

Virologic Failure

Virologic failure refers to either an incomplete initial response to therapy or a viral rebound after virologic suppression is achieved. *Virologic suppression* is defined as having a plasma viral load below the lower level of detection, as measured by highly sensitive assays with lower limits of quantitation of <20 copies/mL to <75 copies/mL. *Virologic failure* is defined as the inability to achieve or maintain plasma viral load <200 copies/mL after 6 months of therapy. Laboratory results must be confirmed with repeat testing before a final assessment of virologic failure is made.

Infants with high plasma viral loads at the initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) occasionally take longer than 6 months to achieve virologic suppression. Because of this, some experts continue the treatment regimen for infants if their viral load is declining but is still ≥200 copies/mL at 6 months. These infants should be monitored closely until they achieve virologic suppression.[1] However, ongoing nonsuppression, especially with non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI)– or raltegravir (RAL)-based regimens, increases the risk of drug resistance.[2,3] RAL, a first-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI), has a low barrier to resistance and requires twice-daily dosing in children and adolescents; it is the only INSTI approved for use in infants <30 days of age. For very young infants started on an antiretroviral therapy (ART) regimen with RAL or the NNRTI nevirapine (NVP), a change to dolutegravir (DTG), a second-generation INSTI, is recommended after 30 days of age for effective and durable viral suppression (see What to Start: Antiretroviral Treatment Regimens Recommended for Initial Therapy in Infants and Children With HIV).

The clinical implications of low-level viremia, HIV RNA levels that are between the lower level of detection and <200 copies/mL in people on ART, remain unclear. Adults with HIV who have detectable viral loads and a quantified result of <200 copies/mL after 6 months of ART generally achieve virologic suppression without changing regimens.[4,5] However, additional studies in adults have found that low-level viremia may be associated with an increased risk of later virologic failure.[6-10] In contrast, a study that followed a cohort of 57 adults with low-level viremia (21–200 copies/mL) reported that none of the participants had resistance to their regimens, and all had adequate plasma ARV concentrations. At 96 weeks of follow-up, 7% had virologic failure; none was attributed to viral resistance.[11] Children with low-level viremia should have their viral load monitored more frequently (at least every 3 months) to assess for virologic failure or the need for ART optimization.[12]

"Blips"—defined as isolated episodes of a detectable but low level of plasma viral load that are followed by a return to viral suppression—are common and not generally reflective of short-term virologic failure, although they may indicate an increased risk of virologic failure after 12 to 24 months.[13-15] Children who have a detectable viral load should have their viral load monitored closely to ensure it has returned to undetectable levels. As noted above, persistent viremia >200 copies/mL indicates virologic failure.

Poor Immunologic Response Despite Virologic Suppression

Poor immunologic response despite virologic suppression is uncommon in children.[16] Children with baseline severe immunosuppression often take longer than 1 year to achieve CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count recovery, even if virologic suppression occurs more promptly (see Appendix C. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pediatric HIV CD4 Cell Count/Percentage and HIV-Related Diseases Categorization). Children who have very low baseline CD4 counts before initiating ART are at higher risk of an impaired CD4 response to ART and, based on data from adult studies, may be at higher risk of death and AIDS-defining illnesses despite virologic suppression.[17-19] During the early treatment period, before immune recovery or in cases of persistent immunosuppression, clinical disease progression can occur. In an international study, 68% of children and adolescents had advanced/severe immunosuppression for age at initiation of ART, and 12% of children and adolescents had a poor immunologic response (defined as advanced/severe immunosuppression for age) 1 year after viral suppression (defined as <400 copies/mL).[20] Among those with a poor immunologic response at 1 year after viral suppression, a fourfold increased risk of an AIDS diagnosis or death was observed compared with immune responders (rate ratio 4.04; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.83–8.92). Poor immunologic response dropped to 7% at 2 years and 3% at 3 years in those with continued viral suppression.[20] Studies in adults with HIV note that CD4 count recovery at 1 year and 2 years after initiation of initial therapy is independent of the drug class used (i.e., boosted protease inhibitor [PI], INSTI, or NNRTI).[21]

In cases of poor immunologic response despite virologic suppression, clinicians should first exclude laboratory error in CD4 values or viral load measurements and ensure that CD4 values have been interpreted correctly in relation to the natural decline in CD4 count that occurs during the first 5 to 6 years of life. Another laboratory consideration is that some viral load assays may not amplify all HIV groups and subtypes (e.g., HIV-1 non-M groups, HIV-2), resulting in falsely low or negative viral load results (see Diagnosis of HIV Infection in Infants and Children and Clinical and Laboratory Monitoring of Pediatric HIV Infection). Once laboratory results are confirmed, clinicians should evaluate children for adverse events, medical conditions, and other factors that can cause CD4 values to decrease (see Table 19 below). Several drugs (e.g., corticosteroids, chemotherapeutic agents) and conditions (e.g., hepatitis C virus, tuberculosis [TB], malnutrition, Sjogren's syndrome, sarcoidosis, syphilis, cirrhosis, acute viral infections) are independently associated with low CD4 values.[22]

In summary, poor immunologic response to treatment can occur. Management consists of confirming that CD4 values and viral load measurements are accurate, avoiding the use of drugs that are associated with low CD4 values, and treating other conditions that could impair CD4 recovery. The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) **does not recommend** modifying an ARV regimen based on lack of immunologic response if virologic suppression is confirmed.

Poor Clinical Response Despite Adequate Virologic and Immunologic Responses

Clinicians must carefully evaluate children who experience clinical disease progression despite favorable immunologic and virologic responses to ART; not all cases represent ART failure. At times, after initiation of ART, children will suffer a clinical deterioration due to paradoxical worsening of a known OI or unmasking of a previously undiagnosed OI due to a profound immune response (i.e., IRIS) related to successful viral suppression. These circumstances, including IRIS, do not represent ART treatment failure and do not generally require discontinuation or change in

ART.[23,24] Children who have suffered irreversible damage to their lungs, brain, or other organs—especially during prolonged and profound pre-treatment immunosuppression—may continue to have recurrent infections or symptoms in the damaged organs, because the immunologic improvement may not reverse damage to the organs.[25] Such cases do not represent ART failure, and these children would not benefit from a change in ARV regimen. Before a definitive conclusion of ART clinical failure is reached, a child should be evaluated to rule out (and, when indicated, treat) other causes or conditions that can occur with or without HIV-related immunosuppression, such as pulmonary TB, malnutrition, and malignancy.

Occasionally, however, children will develop new HIV-related OIs (e.g., *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia or esophageal candidiasis that occurs more than 6 months after achieving markedly improved CD4 values and virologic suppression) that are not related to IRIS, pre-existing organ damage, or another cause.[16] Although such cases are rare, they may represent ART clinical failure, and improvement in CD4 values may not necessarily normalize immunologic function. In children who have signs of new or progressive abnormal neurodevelopment, some experts change the ARV regimen, aiming to include agents that are known to achieve higher concentrations in the central nervous system. However, the data regarding the effectiveness of this strategy are inconclusive.[26,27]

Table 19. Discordance Among Virologic, Immunologic, and Clinical Responses

Differential Diagnosis of Poor Immunologic Response Despite Virologic Suppression
Poor Immunologic Response Despite Virologic Suppression and Good Clinical Response
• Laboratory error (in CD4 value or viral load measurement)
• Misinterpretation of normal, age-related CD4 count decline (i.e., the immunologic response is not actually poor) (see Table 5. CD4 Cell Counts and Percentages in Healthy Children: Distribution by Age)
• Low pre-treatment CD4 count or percentage
• AEs that are associated with the use of certain drugs (e.g., ZDV, TMP-SMX, systemic corticosteroids)
• Use of systemic corticosteroids or chemotherapeutic agents
• Conditions that can cause low CD4 values (e.g., HCV, acute viral infections, TB, malnutrition, Sjogren's syndrome, sarcoidosis, syphilis)
Poor Immunologic and Clinical Responses Despite Virologic Suppression
• Laboratory error (in CD4 value or viral load measurement)
• Falsely low viral load result for an HIV strain/type that is not detected by viral load assay (i.e., HIV-1 non-M groups, HIV-1 non-B subtypes, HIV-2 [although this is unusual with newer viral load assays])
• Persistent immunodeficiency that occurs soon after initiating ART, but before ART-related reconstitution
• Primary protein-calorie malnutrition
• Untreated TB
• Malignancy

Table 19. Discordance Among Virologic, Immunologic, and Clinical Responses

Differential Diagnosis of Poor Clinical Response Despite Adequate Virologic and Immunologic Responses
• IRIS • A previously unrecognized, pre-existing infection or condition (e.g., TB, malignancy) • Malnutrition • Clinical manifestations of previous organ damage: brain (e.g., strokes, vasculopathy, worsening neurodevelopmental delay), lungs (e.g., bronchiectasis), cardiac (e.g., cardiomyopathy), renal (e.g., HIV-related kidney disease) • A new clinical event due to a non-HIV illness or condition • A new, or otherwise unexplained, HIV-related clinical event (e.g., treatment failure)

Key: AE = adverse effect; ART = antiretroviral therapy; CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte; HCV = hepatitis C virus; IRIS = immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome; TB = tuberculosis; TMP-SMX = trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole; ZDV = zidovudine

Management of Virologic Failure

The approach to managing and subsequently treating virologic failure will differ depending on the etiology of the problem. When assessing a child with suspected virologic failure, clinicians should evaluate therapy adherence and medication intolerance, confirm that the prescribed dosing is correct (and understood by the child and/or caregiver) for all medications in the regimen, consider possible pharmacokinetic interactions that might lead to low drug levels, and test for possible drug resistance (see Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance, Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information, and Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). Although many factors can contribute to virologic failure, the main barrier to sustained virologic suppression in adults and children is incomplete adherence to medication regimens, with the subsequent emergence of viral mutations that confer partial or complete resistance to one or more components of the ARV regimen. See Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents with HIV for guidance on assessing adherence and strategies for improving adherence.

Virologic Failure With No Antiretroviral Drug Resistance Identified

Persistent viremia in the absence of detectable viral resistance to current medications is usually a result of nonadherence, but it is important to consider other factors, such as poor drug absorption, incorrect dosing, and drug interactions. If adequate drug exposure can be ensured, then adherence to the current regimen should result in virologic suppression. Resistance testing should take place while a child is on therapy. After discontinuing therapy, plasma viral strains may quickly revert to wild type and reemerge as the predominant viral population, in which case, resistance testing can fail to identify the drug-resistant virus (see Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). In this situation, resistance can be identified by restarting the prior medications while emphasizing adherence and repeating resistance testing in 4 weeks if plasma virus remains detectable. If the HIV plasma viral load becomes undetectable, then nonadherence was likely the original cause of virologic failure.

If a new, more convenient regimen could address the main barrier to adherence, it is reasonable for a clinician to switch a child or adolescent to this new regimen (e.g., a single fixed-dose combination [FDC] tablet taken once daily) while closely monitoring adherence and viral load (see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a

Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents in Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). Similarly, if an ART side effect or tolerability is found to be impacting adherence, switching to a new regimen with close monitoring should be considered. INSTI-based, once-daily regimens in FDCs address both convenience and tolerability in most cases. However, in cases where clinicians determine that children and adolescents have poor adherence to the current regimen and that adherence is unlikely to improve with a new regimen, clinicians should address barriers to adherence before initiating a new regimen (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV).

Virologic Treatment Failure With Antiretroviral Drug Resistance Identified

After deciding that a change in therapy is necessary, a clinician should attempt to identify at least two, but preferably three, fully active ARV agents from at least two different drug classes to use in a child's new regimen. The clinician should consider all of the child's past and recent drug-resistance test results, the child's prior exposure to ARV drugs, whether the child and caregiver is likely to adhere to the regimen, and whether the child and caregiver find a particular regimen acceptable.[28-32] This process often requires using agents from one or more drug classes that are new to the child. However, clinicians should be aware that drug-resistance mutations can confer cross-resistance within a drug class, so a drug that is new to the child may still have diminished antiviral potency. Substituting or adding a single drug to a failing regimen is **not recommended,** because this is unlikely to lead to durable virologic suppression and will likely result in additional drug resistance. However, there is evidence demonstrating that substituting out a failing NNRTI with either DTG or a boosted PI and continuing the nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTI) backbone (even if not fully active) can result in sustained virologic suppression.[33] Both DTG and boosted darunavir (DRV) have a high barrier to developing drug resistance, which may contribute to the ability to sustain viral suppression without two active ARV agents. See the description of the Nucleosides And Darunavir/Dolutegravir in Africa (NADIA) and Once-daily DTG-based ART in Young People vs. Standard Therapy (ODYSSEY) trials below in Therapeutic Options to Achieve Complete Virologic Suppression After Virologic Failure. When reviewing results of drug-resistance assays, clinicians should review the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database to determine if a change in the ARV regimen is required and, if so, which ARV agents can be retained. A pediatric HIV specialist should be consulted when determining which new regimen will have the best chance of achieving complete virologic suppression in children who have experienced treatment failure.

The process of switching a child to a new regimen must include a discussion of treatment adherence and potential toxicity with the child and the child's caregivers. This discussion should be appropriate for the childs's age and stage of development. Clinicians should be aware that some medications have conflicting food requirements and concomitant medication restrictions that may complicate the administration of a regimen. Timing of medication administration is particularly important because it helps ensure adequate ARV drug exposures throughout the day. Palatability, pill size, number of pills, and dosing frequency all need to be considered when choosing a new regimen.[34]

Therapeutic Options to Achieve Complete Virologic Suppression After Virologic Failure

ARV regimens should be chosen based on a child's treatment history and drug-resistance test results to optimize ARV drug potency in the new regimen (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in

Children and Adolescents With HIV). A general strategy for regimen changes is shown in Table 20 below; however, as additional agents are licensed and studied for use in children, newer regimens that are better tailored to the needs of each child may be constructed.

It is important to review individual drug profiles for information about drug interactions and dose adjustments when devising a regimen for children with multiclass drug resistance. Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information provides detailed information on drug formulations, pediatric and adult doses, and toxicity, as well as discussions of the available data on the use of ARV drugs in children. Previously prescribed drugs that were discontinued because of poor tolerance or poor adherence may sometimes be reintroduced if drug resistance did not develop and if prior difficulties with tolerance and adherence can be overcome (e.g., by switching to a new formulation, such as an FDC tablet).

The availability of newer drugs within existing drug classes and the introduction of new classes of drugs increase the likelihood of finding three active drugs, even for children with extensive drug resistance (see Table 20 below). INSTI-based regimens are increasingly used for children who have experienced treatment failure on NNRTI-based regimens or PI-based regimens.[35,36] Second-generation INSTIs DTG and bictegravir have the advantage of once-daily dosing, small pill size or dispersible formulations, and higher barrier to the development of drug resistance; they also often retain ARV activity in people who have experienced treatment failure on RAL-based therapy (see the Dolutegravir and Bictegravir sections for the latest age and weight indications).[37] Caution should be exercised when considering regimens that include first-generation INSTIs with a lower barrier to resistance (e.g., RAL, elvitegravir) in children who are highly treatment experienced as they are less likely to achieve viral suppression.[38]

Data from pediatric and adult studies support the efficacy of a regimen that contains a second-generation INSTI (DTG) plus two NRTIs for those who experience treatment failure on an initial NNRTI-based regimen. Both the ODYSSEY[39] and NADIA[40] trials indicate that DTG is non-inferior to a boosted-PI regimen when transitioning from a failing NNRTI-based regimen.

In ODYSSEY, 707 children weighing at least 14 kg, with a median age of 12.2 years, were randomized to DTG-based ART versus standard care for either first-line or second-line treatment. Fifty-six percent (n = 396) of participants were in the second-line therapy group (ODYSSEY B cohort), with an enrollment HIV-1 RNA viral load of at least 500 copies/mL. Participants were randomized 1:1 to either DTG and two NRTIs or second-line standard care (a third new agent and two NRTIs with at least one NRTI with preserved activity); 98% of those in the standard-care group received a boosted PI–based regimen. Boosted-PI regimens were 72% boosted lopinavir, 24% boosted atazanvir, and 1% boosted DRV. NRTI backbone therapies included abacavir (ABC) and lamivudine (3TC) in 65% of participants, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) and 3TC or TDF and emtricitabine (FTC) in 23% of participants, and zidovudine (ZDV) and 3TC in 11% of participants, and 1% of participants received a different combination. The NRTIs were balanced across the groups. Across both cohorts, the risk of treatment failure was approximately 40% lower (hazard ratio 0.60; 95% CI, 0.42–0.86) in the DTG-based treatment group than in the standard-care group. Within the ODYSSEY B cohort at 96 weeks, 32 of 196 participants (16%) in the DTG group had treatment failures, and 41 of 200 participants (20%) in the standard-care group had treatment failures. Twenty-nine of the 32 participants in the DTG group with treatment failure had a post-treatment resistance test available, with 23 of 29 having at least one major mutation after treatment. In the standard-care cohort, 36 of 40 participants with virologic failure had a major mutation after treatment. In the DTG

group, four participants had an INSTI-related mutation, and three of the four were receiving ZDV and 3TC. In the standard-care group, two participants had a new PI-related mutation.

In the NADIA trial, adults experiencing virologic failure on a NNRTI plus 3TC or FTC and TDF regimen were randomized to DTG or darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) plus 3TC and secondarily randomized to either TDF or ZDV. In this study, full activity of the NRTIs based on genotyping was not required. At both 48 and 96 weeks, >85% of participants met the primary endpoint of viral suppression, defined as <400 copies/mL in all arms of the study, and the DTG regimen was non-inferior to the DRV/r regimen. At 96 weeks, 9 of 235 (4%) participants on the DTG regimen developed DTG resistance, with the majority (6 of 9) also assigned to ZDV. No PI resistance was developed in the DRV/r group.

Using evidence from both the ODYSSEY and NADIA trials, if a child is on a failing regimen of one NNRTI plus two NRTIs, either DTG or a boosted PI could be substituted for the NNRTI even with partially active NRTIs. Importantly, in this scenario, the NRTI backbone should either have TDF or tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) plus 3TC or FTC, or ABC and 3TC. A secondary analysis of the ODYSSEY trial demonstrated that children who switched from another regimen to DTG and either TDF- or ABC-based NRTI regimens had similar rates of virologic failure ($P = 0.70$). However, children who switched to DTG plus a ZDV-based NRTI backbone had higher rates of virologic failure compared to the DTG and ABC-based NRTI group ($P = 0.048$). Further, although not statistically significant, the children with high-level ABC resistance had lower rates of virologic failure than children on DTG with ZDV with no or intermediate resistance.[33] Therefore, continuing or switching to ZDV, even with fully retained activity, would not be recommended due to the potential side effects of the medication, the need for twice-daily dosing, and the increased risk of virologic failure with the development of INSTI resistance.

If a child experiences virologic failure on an initial PI-based regimen, there are often limited resistance mutations detected, indicating that poor adherence/tolerance of the regimen may be the cause of poor viral control.[41,42] In these cases, a more tolerable ARV regimen should be sought to improve adherence and achieve virologic suppression. Switching to an INSTI-based regimen can be effective in some PI-experienced children, and these are typically better tolerated than PI-based regimens.[35,36,43-45]

Some studies in adults have suggested that 3TC can still contribute to suppression of HIV replication in people with 3TC resistance mutations. Continuation of 3TC also can maintain a 3TC mutation (184V) that can partially reverse the effects of other mutations that confer resistance to ZDV and TDF.[46-48]

Studies have compared the use of NRTI-sparing and NRTI-containing regimens in adults with multidrug resistance who experienced virologic failure on a previous regimen. These studies have demonstrated no clear benefit of including NRTIs in the new regimen.[49,50] One of these studies reported no difference in rate of virologic suppression but a trend toward a higher mortality in adults who were randomized to receive a regimen that included NRTIs than in adults who were randomized to receive an NRTI-sparing regimen.[50] There are no studies of NRTI-sparing regimens in children with virologic failure and multidrug resistance, but an NRTI-sparing regimen may be a reasonable option for children with extensive NRTI resistance.

Additional Therapeutic Options to Achieve Virologic Suppression When Multidrug-Resistant Virus Is Present

Regimens that include an INSTI and a potent boosted PI with or without ETR have been effective during small pediatric studies of extensively ART-experienced children with multiclass drug resistance.[51-54] In the adult randomized control trial, D^{2}EFT, participants were switched from a failing NNRTI regimen to either DRV/r and DTG or DTG and two NRTIs (TDF plus either FTC or 3TC) versus standard of care DRV/r and two NRTIs. Viral suppression (defined as <50 copies/mL) at 48 weeks was achieved in 84% receiving DRV/r plus DTG, 78% receiving DTG plus two NRTIs, and 75% receiving DRV/r plus two NRTIs. DRV/r plus DTG was non-inferior to DRV/r and two NRTIs.[55]

The NNRTIs etravirine (ETR) and rilpivirine can retain activity against NVP-resistant virus or EFV-resistant virus in the absence of certain key NNRTI mutations, but ETR has generally been tested only in regimens that also contain a boosted PI.[28,56] For this reason, the Panel recommends using ETR as part of a regimen that includes a boosted PI (see the Etravirine section). Doravirine is a once-daily NNRTI that retains activity against EFV/NVP-resistant virus and is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg. Studies have been completed in adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years demonstrating safety and tolerability[57,58] (see the Doravirine section).

Maraviroc, a CCR5 antagonist, is an alternative drug class; however, many children with ART experience children and some children with ART naivety already harbor a CXCR4-tropic virus, which precludes its use.[59,60]

When searching for at least two fully active agents in cases of extensive drug resistance, clinicians should consider the potential availability of new therapeutic agents that are not currently being studied in children or that may be approved for use in children in the future. Information about clinical trials can be found using the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Clinical Trials database and by consulting a pediatric HIV specialist. Children should be enrolled in clinical trials of new drugs whenever possible. See ClinicalTrials.gov for more information.

Pediatric dosing for off-label use of ARV drugs is problematic, because absorption, hepatic metabolism, and excretion change with age.[61] In clinical trials of several ARV agents, direct extrapolation of a pediatric dose from an adult dose, based on a child's body weight or body surface area, was shown to result in an underestimation of the appropriate pediatric dose.[62]

Off-label use of ARV agents, however, may be necessary for children with HIV who have limited ARV drug options. In this circumstance, consulting a pediatric HIV specialist for advice about potential regimens, assistance with access to unpublished data from clinical trials or other limited off-label pediatric uses, and referral to suitable clinical trials are recommended.

Two agents that inhibit the attachment of the glycoprotein 120 (gp120) region of the virus to the CD4 molecule are approved for adolescents >18 years with multidrug resistance. Oral fostemsavir (FTR) is a gp120 attachment inhibitor, and ibalizumab (given by infusion twice monthly) is a humanized monoclonal antibody that targets the gp120 attachment area on the CD4 molecule.[63,64] Because these represent drugs with new novel targets, they would be expected to be beneficial in people with multiclass drug resistance. In a Phase 3 study of adults with multidrug-resistant HIV-1 who are heavily treatment experienced, adding FTR to optimized background therapy resulted in improved

and sustained viral suppression at 96 weeks in 163 of 272 (60%) of participants.[65] It should be noted that resistance can develop with incomplete adherence to these new agents, especially when added to a failing regimen. Although FTR is only approved for adults, research is ongoing to assess safety in the pediatric population.[66]

Lenacapavir (LEN) is a capsid inhibitor that is newly FDA approved for heavily treatment-experienced adults who have limited ARV options due to resistance, safety, or intolerance (see the Lenacapavir section). A randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind, multicenter trial (CAPELLA) evaluated LEN in combination with an optimized background ART regimen in 72 people with virologic failure who had multidrug-resistant HIV-1 (resistance to at least two antiretroviral medications from at least three main drug classes).[67] Although open to participants age ≥12 years, the youngest participant enrolled was 23 years. The results showed that in Cohort 1, 21 of 24 (88%) participants in the LEN group had a decrease of at least 0.5 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL in viral load by Day 15, as compared to 2 of 12 participants (17%) in the placebo group ($P < 0.001$); 81% of participants in the LEN group achieved durable viral suppression through 26 weeks of LEN plus an optimized background ART regimen. None of the participants developed serious adverse events related to LEN. Those receiving LEN had a greater reduction from baseline in viral load than those who received placebo. Eight participants of 72 enrolled developed LEN resistance.[68]

Management Options When Two Fully Active Agents Cannot Be Identified or Administered

It may be impossible to provide an effective and sustainable therapeutic regimen when there is no combination of currently available agents that are active against an extensively drug-resistant virus in a child or when a child is unable to adhere to or tolerate ART.

The decision to continue a nonsuppressive regimen must be made on an individual basis after weighing potential benefits and risks. Specifically, providers must balance the inherent tension between the benefits of virologic suppression and the risks of continued viral replication with potential evolution of viral drug resistance in the setting of inadequate ARV drug exposure (e.g., nonadherence or a nonsuppressive, suboptimal regimen). Nonsuppressive regimens could decrease viral fitness and, thus, slow clinical and immunologic deterioration while a child or adolescent is either working on adherence or awaiting access to new agents that are expected to achieve sustained virologic suppression.[69] However, persistent viremia in the context of ARV drug pressure has the potential to generate additional resistance mutations that could further compromise agents in the same class that might otherwise have been active in subsequent regimens (e.g., continuing first-generation INSTIs or NNRTIs). Children who continue to use nonsuppressive regimens should be followed more closely than those with stable virologic status, and the potential to successfully initiate a fully suppressive ARV regimen should be reassessed at every opportunity.

The use of NRTI-only holding regimens or a complete interruption of therapy **is not recommended.** One trial, the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescents AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT P1094), randomized children with the M184V resistance mutation and documented nonadherence to continue their nonsuppressive, non-NNRTI–based regimen or to switch to a 3TC (or FTC) monotherapy-holding regimen. Children who switched to monotherapy were significantly more likely to experience a 30% decline in absolute CD4 count (the primary outcome) over a 28-week period.[70]

Complete treatment interruption also has been associated with immunologic declines and poor clinical outcomes[71,72]; therefore, it **is not recommended** (see Antiretroviral Treatment Interruption in Children With HIV).

Table 20. Options for Regimens With at Least Two Fully Active Agents to Achieve Virologic Suppression in Children With Virologic Failure and Evidence of Viral Resistance

To optimize antiretroviral (ARV) drug effectiveness, clinicians should evaluate a child's treatment history and drug-resistance test results when choosing a new ARV regimen. Doing so is particularly important when selecting the nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) components of a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI)–based regimen, where drug resistance to the NNRTIs can occur rapidly if the virus is not sufficiently sensitive to the NRTIs. Regimens should contain at least two, but preferably three, fully active drugs for durable and potent virologic suppression. If the M184V/I mutation associated with emtricitabine and lamivudine is present, these medications should be continued if the new regimen contains tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, tenofovir alafenamide, or zidovudine. The presence of this mutation may increase susceptibility to these NRTIs.

Please see individual drug profiles for information about weight and age limitations (e.g., do not use darunavir in children aged <3 years), drug interactions, and dose adjustments when devising a regimen for children with multiclass drug resistance (see Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information). When modifying ARV regimens in children with chronic hepatitis B/HIV coinfection, the new regimen must contain agents active against hepatitis B. Collaboration with a pediatric HIV specialist is especially important when choosing regimens for children with multiclass drug resistance. Regimens in this table are provided as examples, but the list is not exhaustive.

Prior Failed Regimen	New Regimen Options[a,b]
Two NRTIs Plus an NNRTI	Preferred Regimen • Two NRTIs plus a second-generation INSTI (BIC or DTG)[c] Alternative Regimen • Two NRTIs plus a boosted PI
Two NRTIs Plus a PI	Preferred Regimen • Two NRTIs plus a second-generation INSTI (BIC or DTG)[c] Alternative Regimen • DTG plus a different boosted PI and with or without NRTI(s)
Two NRTIs Plus an INSTI	• Two NRTIs plus a boosted PI • Second-generation INSTI (DTG[c] or BIC[c] if not used in the prior regimen) with a boosted PI with or without NRTI(s). DTG may need to be given twice daily if a child has certain documented INSTI mutations, or if there is concern about certain mutations (see the Dolutegravir section for dosing instructions). • Two NRTIs plus an NNRTI[d]
Failed Regimen(s) That Included NRTI(s), NNRTI(s), and PI(s)	If NRTIs Are Fully Active • Second-generation INSTI (DTG or BIC)[c] plus two NRTIs

Table 20. Options for Regimens With at Least Two Fully Active Agents to Achieve Virologic Suppression in Patients With Virologic Failure and Evidence of Viral Resistance

	If NRTIs Are Not Fully Active[b] • Second-generation INSTI plus TAF/FTC or TDF/XTC if able to take TAF or TDF • Second-generation INSTI plus two NRTIs with a boosted PI • Second-generation INSTI with a boosted PI (based on resistance results). Consider ETR or RPV based on resistance results, age, and weight. • Consider MVC if additional active drug(s) are needed. • Consider off-label use of approved agents or enrollment in clinical trials for novel antiretroviral treatments.

[a] The possibility of planned and unplanned pregnancy should be considered when selecting an ART regimen for an adolescent. When discussing ART options with adolescents and their caregivers, it is important to consider childbearing potential and the benefits and risks of all ARV drugs and to provide the information and counseling needed to support informed decision-making; refer to the Perinatal Guidelines (see Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs During Pregnancy, Table 7. Situation-Specific Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs During Pregnancy and When Trying to Conceive, and Appendix C. Antiretroviral Counseling Guide for Health Care Providers).

[b] When modifying ARV regimens in children with chronic hepatitis B/HIV coinfection, the new regimen must contain agents active against hepatitis B.

[c] RAL, a first-generation INSTI, has a low barrier to resistance and requires twice-daily dosing in children and adolescents; the second-generation INSTIs BIC and DTG have a higher barrier to resistance and only require once-daily dosing. Many members of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV would use BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy) in children with prior treatment failure who have virus with the M184 mutation (see the Bictegravir section).

[d] NNRTIs could be an option in younger children with no exposure to NNRTIs and with taste aversion to boosted PIs, if NRTIs have preserved activity.

Key: ART = antiretroviral therapy; ARV = antiretroviral; BIC = bictegravir; DTG = dolutegravir; FTC = emtricitabine; ETR = etravirine; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; MVC = maraviroc; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; RAL = raltegravir; RPV = rilpivirine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; XTC = 3TC (lamivudine) or FTC

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Antiretroviral Treatment Interruption in Children With HIV

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Panel's Recommendations
• Outside the context of clinical trials, treatment interruptions of antiretroviral therapy (ART) **are not recommended** for children. • Treatment interruption **is not recommended** as a strategy in clinical settings to confirm diagnosis or to assess remission or cure (**AII**). • Families should receive education and counseling about common causes of temporary unplanned treatment interruptions and ways to prevent them (e.g., automatic refills, mailed prescriptions, planning for the adequate supply of medications when traveling). See Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV (**BIII**). • At times, ART may need to be interrupted or changed due to drug-related side effects or toxicity. See Management of Medication Toxicity or Intolerance for guidance (**AIII**).
Rating of Recommendations: A = Strong; B = Moderate; C = Optional *Rating of Evidence: I = One or more randomized trials in children† with clinical outcomes and/or validated endpoints; I* = One or more randomized trials in adults with clinical outcomes and/or validated laboratory endpoints with accompanying data in children† from one or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies with long-term clinical outcomes; II = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational cohort studies in children† with long-term outcomes; II* = One or more well-designed, nonrandomized trials or observational studies in adults with long-term clinical outcomes with accompanying data in children† from one or more similar nonrandomized trials or cohort studies with clinical outcome data; III = Expert opinion* *† Studies that include children or children/adolescents, but not studies limited to postpubertal adolescents*

Unplanned Treatment Interruptions

Temporary discontinuation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) may be unavoidable in some situations that preclude oral intake, such as serious treatment-related toxicity, acute gastrointestinal illnesses, or planned surgeries. Children might experience interruptions due to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs being out of stock locally or if they run out of ARV drugs during travel or immigration to the United States. Efforts should be made to minimize the duration of these temporary interruptions. Prolonged interruptions of ART also can result from disengagement from care or other social or psychological issues that affect adherence. Routine assessment of adherence and barriers is essential (see Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV). Utilizing viral load testing alone to identify treatment interruptions may not be sufficient as some children may restart treatment in the weeks ahead of clinic visits.

Observational studies of children and youth with unplanned or nonprescribed treatment interruptions suggest that interruptions are common and that prolonged interruptions can lead to immunologic decline.[1-4] In a retrospective study of 483 children in a French pediatric cohort from the National Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, 42% of participants had treatment interruptions of ≥3 months (with a median of 12.1 months). Interruption was associated with lower CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell percentages after 4 years, even in those who restarted therapy.[5] A similar

retrospective study of 136 youth (median age 12.9 years) in the United States found that 38 participants (28%) with histories of treatment interruption had lower CD4 counts and higher HIV RNA levels than participants who had continuous treatment.[6] A study from the International epidemiology Databases to Evaluate AIDS Southern Africa, which includes 53,674 children aged <16 years, found that lapses in clinical care of greater than 180 days within the first 6 months of treatment were associated with increased mortality (adjusted hazard ratio [aHR] = 1.52; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.12–2.04); while lapses in care after the first 6 months were not (aHR = 1.05; 95% CI, 0.77–1.44).[7]

The risk of unplanned ART interruptions can be mitigated by clinicians working closely with families. Providers should provide anticipatory guidance about potential short-term interruptions (e.g., sleepovers). If a child will be away from home for an extended period of time (e.g., tourism, education, summer camp), clinicians should help families plan to ensure continuous access to medications. Some pharmacies are able to dispense up to 90 days of medication for convenience or upcoming travel; however, authorization from the insurance provider may be required. Clinicians should review the duration of current prescriptions and anticipate any dose changes that might be needed due to growth of the child and to determine when the prescribed refills will terminate. For prolonged travel within the United States, providers either can proactively order refills at pharmacies close to their travel destinations to ensure they will be in stock or have medications mailed directly to families at other convenient locations. Alternatively, changing the ART regimen to incorporate ARV drugs available in the locations where families will be traveling would make it easier to address cases of lost medications or unanticipated prolonged travel. For additional information, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) webpage on Traveling Abroad With Medicine | CDC, as well as the guideline section on Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy in Children and Adolescents With HIV.

Unforeseeable events, such as natural disasters or political instability, may occur and displace children from their primary HIV care programs. See Guidance for Non-HIV-Specialized Providers Caring for People With HIV Who Have Been Displaced by Disasters (Such as a Hurricane) for information about how to care for children with HIV who are in these situations.

Structured Treatment Interruptions

Structured treatment interruptions are scheduled periods of time during which oral ART is not prescribed or administered. This strategy was once considered a method for providing people with time off ART to reduce the risk of toxicity and costs. Randomized clinical trials of adults with HIV have demonstrated that structured treatment interruptions are associated with significantly higher morbidity and mortality than continuous ART[8]; Current U.S. Department of Health and Human Services HIV treatment guidelines recommend against planned, long-term structured treatment interruptions in adults (see Discontinuation or Interruption of Antiretroviral Therapy in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). The introduction of long-acting injectable regimens may reduce the desire for structured treatment interruptions used solely to relieve the burden of daily dosing of oral ART.

Few studies have evaluated structured treatment interruption in children. In one trial from Europe and Thailand (PENTA 11), 109 children (median age 9 years) on ART and with virologic suppression were randomized to receive continuous therapy (CT) or to undergo treatment interruption. Although no significant differences in rates of adverse events (AEs) were observed between the two groups at 2 years, 19 of 56 children (34%) in the structured treatment interruption arm met CD4 criteria to

restart therapy between 6 and 42 weeks after interruption; thus, the additional time off ART provided by the strategy ultimately was fairly limited.[9,10] The Children with HIV Early Antiretroviral Therapy (CHER) trial in South Africa was designed to determine whether infants who initiated ART early could safely discontinue therapy at either 40 weeks or 96 weeks; infants would reinitiate treatment based on CD4 decline. There was no continued ART group. The median time to the start of continuous ART after interruption was 33 weeks (interquartile range [IQR] 26–45 weeks) among the infants who discontinued ART after 40 weeks, and 70 weeks (IQR 35–109 weeks) among the infants who discontinued ART after 96 weeks.[11,12] A secondary analysis of neurodevelopmental outcomes at age 5 years did not show any significant differences among the children in the different study arms.[13] In another randomized trial, 12 of 21 infants in the treatment interruption arm met ART restart criteria within 3 months.[14] In summary, although trials of structured treatment interruptions in children have not shown significant short-term morbidity, the gains in time off ART are limited, and the long-term outcomes remain unknown.

The case of an infant from Mississippi who initiated ART soon after birth and had a prolonged period of time without viremia after an unplanned treatment interruption raised the hope that it may be possible to stop or reduce the intensity of ART (e.g., use fewer agents) in some infants (see Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV).[15,16] However, the "Mississippi infant" had documented viral rebound after 28 months off ART,[17] and additional reports have emerged of infants who experienced rebound viremia after stopping ART, despite having undetectable HIV DNA and RNA while on ART.[18-20] A South African child aged 9.5 years was reported to have low levels of virus that was not replication competent after receiving ART from approximately 2 to 24 months of age; the factors that led to this outcome remain unknown.[21]

"Analytical" treatment interruptions are currently being incorporated into studies of remission in adults and children, but the potential risks and benefits of strategies need to be continually evaluated.[22-25] In the IMPAACT P1115 study, infants initiated a regimen that included nevirapine plus two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) within 48 hours of life with lopinavir/ritonavir added at ≥42 weeks postmenstrual age; among six children with HIV who had analytical treatment interruption (at a median of 5.5 years of age), four achieved ART-free remission through the study-defined endpoint of 48 weeks.[26] Although the results from P1115 are promising, additional research into the predictors of remission and treatment regimens that achieve remission are needed before similar interruptions are employed in clinical settings.

Currently, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) **does not recommend** treatment interruption as a strategy in clinical settings to confirm diagnosis or to assess remission or cure in infants who reverted to negative serology, tested negative for HIV DNA, or received an initial diagnosis that was based on a single positive nucleic acid test. The Panel encourages providers to consult an expert on pediatric HIV when they are concerned about the validity of the test results that led to treatment initiation in children with HIV.

Short-Cycle Therapy Strategies

One approach, called short-cycle therapy (SCT), schedules 4-day treatment interruptions rather than waiting to restart ART after CD4 count declines or other AEs occur. In one proof-of-concept study (ATN015), 32 participants (aged 12–24 years) underwent short cycles of 4 days on and 3 days off ART.[27] Participants received protease inhibitor–based ART and had at least 6 months of documented viral suppression (defined as a viral load <400 copies/mL) and CD4 counts above

350 cells/mm^3. Most participants demonstrated good adherence to the schedule, but 12 participants (37.5%) developed confirmed viral load rebounds >400 copies/mL, and 18 participants (56%) left the study. SCT had no impact on CD4 counts.

Other recent trials have shown more promising results. The BREATHER (PENTA 16) study randomized 199 children and young adults (aged 8–24 years) with virologic suppression for >12 months to SCT of 5 days on and 2 days off ART or CT with efavirenz (EFV) plus two NRTIs; the study demonstrated non-inferiority of SCT compared to CT with similar resistance and inflammatory markers.[28,29] Two participants in the SCT arm and five participants in the CT arm had virologic failure with major mutations related to resistance to non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. Participants generally reported appreciating the option of SCT.[30]

A long-term follow-up study of children from the BREATHER study suggests comparable virologic failure rates between the SCT and CT arms after a median of 3.6 years; both arms had a failure rate of approximately 16%.[31] The participants in the SCT arm experienced a greater number of serious AEs than participants in the CT arm (20 serious AEs in the SCT arm vs. 8 in the CT arm, with the primary difference being rate of hospitalizations); however, the arms experienced comparable rates of the CDC Grade 3 or 4 AEs. The BREATHER trial suggests that SCT with EFV-based ART may be safe in some adolescents and may yield increased patient satisfaction that could lead to better long-term adherence. In a non-inferiority trial, adults randomized to receive SCT (4 days on and 3 days off) had rates of treatment success similar to adults receiving CT (308 of 318 participants [97%]; adjusted difference −1.3%; 95% CI −4.2 to 1.7), with 153 of 258 participants (59%) reporting improvement in daily life satisfaction.[32]

However, the Panel currently believes that additional data are needed to decide whether the BREATHER strategy would be safe in different populations, with different antiretroviral regimens, outside of the context of a trial, and over longer periods. Use of SCT with integrase strand transfer inhibitor–based regimens has not been studied in children.

Conclusion

Cumulative data have demonstrated that treatment interruptions long enough for viremia to recur are generally harmful to children with HIV. Analytic treatment interruptions to assess for remission are employed in research but not recommended in the clinical context. SCT treatment may be safe and increase satisfaction in some people, but the Panel concludes that more data are needed before SCT can be recommended for routine use in pediatric populations. Currently, the Panel **does not recommend** structured treatment interruption in the clinical care of children with HIV; additional studies of treatment interruption strategies in specific situations are warranted.

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Overview

Nucleoside and Nucleotide Analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTIs)

Abacavir

Emtricitabine

Lamivudine

Tenofovir Alafenamide

Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate

Zidovudine

Non-Nucleoside Analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NNRTIs)

Doravirine

Efavirenz

Etravirine

Nevirapine

Rilpivirine

Protease Inhibitors (PIs)

Atazanavir

Darunavir

Lopinavir/Ritonavir

Entry and Fusion Inhibitors

Fostemsavir

Ibalizumab

Maraviroc

Capsid Inhibitors

Lenacapavir

Integrase Inhibitors (INSTIs)

Bictegravir

Cabotegravir

Dolutegravir

Elvitegravir

Raltegravir

Pharmacokinetic Enhancers

Cobicistat

Ritonavir

Fixed-Dose Combinations

Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

Archived Drugs

Didanosine

Enfuvirtide

Fosamprenavir

Indinavir

Nelfinavir

Saquinavir

Stavudine

Tipranavir

Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Nucleoside and Nucleotide Analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

Abacavir (ABC, Ziagen)

Emtricitabine (FTC, Emtriva)

Lamivudine (3TC, Epivir)

Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF, Vemlidy)

Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF, Viread)

Zidovudine (ZDV, Retrovir)

Abacavir (ABC, Ziagen)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Pediatric Oral Solution: 20 mg/mL

Tablet: 300 mg (scored)

Generic Formulations

- 300 mg tablet
- 20 mg/mL pediatric oral solution

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Generic] Abacavir 600 mg/lamivudine 300 mg
- [Triumeq] Abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg
- [Triumeq PD] Abacavir 60 mg/dolutegravir 5 mg/lamivudine 30 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate (Aged Birth Through <1 Month) Dose

Oral Solution

- Abacavir (ABC) is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in infants aged <3 months.
- However, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends ABC 2 mg/kg twice daily for full-term infants from birth through <1 month of age. This recommendation is based on data from pharmacokinetic (PK) modeling of neonatal ABC dosing to target adult plasma ABC exposures and observational data supporting safety of ABC in neonates. The World Health Organization Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery, and Monitoring Annex 1: Dosages for ARV Drugs provides weight-band dosing recommendations for full-term neonates based on the same data. See the Approval, Pharmacokinetics in Neonates and Infants, and Safety in Neonates and Infants sections below.

Selected Adverse Events

- Hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs) can be fatal. HSRs usually occur during the first few weeks of therapy. Symptoms may include fever, rash, nausea, vomiting, malaise or fatigue, loss of appetite, and respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

Special Instructions

- To predict the risk of HSRs, test patients for the HLA-B*5701 allele before starting therapy. Patients who test positive for the HLA-B*5701 allele should not be given ABC. Patients with no prior HLA-B*5701 testing who are tolerating ABC do not need to be tested.
- Warn patients and caregivers about the risk of serious, potentially fatal HSRs. Occurrence of an HSR requires **immediate and permanent discontinuation of ABC. Do not rechallenge.**
- ABC and coformulated tablets can be given with or without food. The oral solution does not require refrigeration.

Infant (Aged ≥1 Month to <3 Months) Dose

Oral Solution

- ABC is not approved by the FDA for use in infants aged <3 months.
- The Panel recommends ABC 4 mg/kg twice daily in full-term infants aged ≥1 month to <3 months. This recommendation is based on modeling data of the ABC 4 mg/kg twice-daily dose using PK simulation for full-term infants aged ≥1 month to <3 months. The International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) P1106 study and two observational cohorts provide reassuring data on the safety of ABC in infants with HIV aged <3 months. See the Approval, Pharmacokinetics in Neonates and Infants, and Safety in Neonates and Infants sections below.

Infant and Child **(Aged ≥3** Months) Dose

Oral Solution

- ABC 8 mg/kg twice daily (maximum 300 mg per dose) or ABC 16 mg/kg once daily (maximum 600 mg per dose)
- In infants and young children who are being treated with liquid formulations of ABC, initiation with once-daily ABC generally is not recommended. The ABC dose can be changed from twice daily to once daily with the liquid formulation to harmonize with other antiretroviral drugs administered once daily.

Weight-Band Dosing of ABC Tablets for Children and Adolescents Weighing **≥14** kg and <25 kg

Weight	Scored 300-mg ABC Tablet		
	Twice-Daily Dose, AM	Twice-Daily Dose, PM	Once-Daily Dose
14 kg to <20 kg	½ tablet (150 mg)	½ tablet (150 mg)	1 tablet (300 mg)
≥20 kg to <25 kg	½ tablet (150 mg)	1 tablet (300 mg)	1½ tablets (450 mg)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- ABC 300 mg twice daily or ABC 600 mg once daily

Abacavir/Lamivudine

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily

[Triumeq PD] Abacavir/Dolutegravir (DTG)/Lamivudine (3TC)

Child Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg and Aged ≥3 Months

- Dispersible Triumeq PD tablets are FDA approved for children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥6 to <25 kg. Triumeq PD is not recommended for children weighing ≥25 kg who are eligible for adult Triumeq dosing.
- For ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible tablets, fully disperse them in 20 mL of drinking water in the supplied cup and swirl the suspension so that no lumps remain. After full dispersion and within 30 minutes of mixing, administer the oral suspension. Rinse the dosing cup with a small amount of water and give this additional water to the child to ensure that the child takes the full dose and that no medication remains in the dosing cup. ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible tablets should not be swallowed whole, chewed, cut, or crushed.
- Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using ABC FDC tablets that contain 3TC. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when 3TC is discontinued (see Lamivudine).

Metabolism/Elimination

- ABC is systemically metabolized by alcohol dehydrogenase and glucuronyl transferase.
- The majority of ABC is excreted as metabolites in urine.

Abacavir Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- ABC requires a dose adjustment in patients with mild hepatic insufficiency and is contraindicated with moderate or severe hepatic insufficiency.
- Do not use ABC/3TC, Triumeq PD, or Triumeq (or the generic equivalents of these FDC tablets) in patients with impaired hepatic function because the dose of ABC cannot be adjusted.

Abacavir Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- ABC does not require dose adjustment in patients with renal impairment.
- Do not use FDC tablets containing 3TC (ABC/3TC, Triumeq PD, Triumeq, or the generic equivalents of these FDC tablets) in patients with creatinine clearance (CrCl) <30 mL/min or patients on dialysis, because the doses of 3TC cannot be adjusted. Data from FDC DTG/3TC (Dovato) suggest that patients with a sustained CrCl of 30–49 mL/min may experience a higher 3TC exposure and should be monitored for hematologic toxicities and potential FDC discontinuation and subsequent adjustment of the treatment regimen. See package inserts for additional information.

- Administer the appropriate number of tablets once daily, dispersed in 15–20 mL of water. See Special Instructions below. Triumeq PD tablets should not be swallowed whole, chewed, cut, or crushed.

Weight-Band Dosing of Triumeq PD Tablets for Children Weighing ≥6 kg and <25 kg

Weight	Recommended Daily Dose	Number of Triumeq PD Tablets
6 kg to <10 kg[a]	ABC 180 mg DTG 15 mg 3TC 90 mg	3[a]
10 **kg to <14** kg	ABC 240 mg DTG 20 mg 3TC 120 mg	4
14 kg to <20 kg	ABC 300 mg DTG 25 mg 3TC 150 mg	5
20 kg to <25 kg	ABC 360 mg DTG 30 mg 3TC 180 mg	6

[a] In infants weighing 6 kg to <10 kg, dosing requires only 15 mL water.

- Use in children who are antiretroviral (ARV) naive or ARV experienced (but integrase strand transfer inhibitor [INSTI]–naive) and who are not being treated with uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1 (UGT1A1) or cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A inducers.

[Triumeq] Abacavir/Dolutegravir/Lamivudine

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- This FDC tablet can be used in patients who are ARV naive or ARV experienced (but INSTI-naive) and who are not being treated with other drugs that act as UGT1A1 or CYP3A inducers.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Abacavir (ABC) neither inhibits nor is metabolized by hepatic cytochrome P450 enzymes. Therefore, it does not cause significant changes in the clearance of agents, such as protease inhibitors (PIs) and non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs), that are metabolized through these pathways.

- ABC plasma concentrations can decrease when ABC is used concurrently with the ritonavir-boosted PIs atazanavir/ritonavir, lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r), and darunavir/ritonavir.[1-3] The mechanism and the clinical significance of the drug interactions with these PIs are unknown. Currently, no recommendations exist for dose adjustments when ABC is coadministered with one of these boosted PIs.
- In a pooled analysis of 230 African children with HIV with a median age of 2.1 years (range 0.1–12.8 years) and a median weight of 9.8 kg (range 2.5–30.0 kg), the population pharmacokinetics (PK) of ABC showed that children on boosted PI LPV/r or NNRTI efavirenz had similar ABC exposures, while concomitant tuberculosis treatment and use of superboosting with LPV significantly reduced ABC concentrations.[4]
- Alcohol exposure (0.7 g per kg ethanol, which is equivalent to five alcoholic drinks) interferes with ABC metabolism; it affects the activity of alcohol dehydrogenase and glucuronyl transferase. This interference increased ABC area under the curve plasma exposure by 41% in adult men with HIV who received ABC 600 mg daily.[5]
- ABC oral solution contains sorbitol, which decreased the exposure of lamivudine (3TC) oral solution in adults when the drugs were administered concurrently.[6] The clinical significance of this interaction is unknown.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, vomiting, fever, headache, diarrhea, rash, anorexia
- *Less common (more severe):* Serious and sometimes fatal hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs) have been observed in approximately 5% of adults and children (rate varies by race/ethnicity) receiving ABC. HSRs generally occur during the first 6 weeks of therapy, but they have also been reported after a single dose of ABC. The risk of an ABC HSR is associated with the presence of the HLA-B*5701 allele; the risk is greatly reduced by not using ABC in those who test positive for the HLA-B*5701 allele. The HSR to ABC is a multiorgan clinical syndrome usually characterized by rash, or signs or symptoms in two or more of the following groups:
    - Fever
    - Constitutional symptoms, including malaise, fatigue, or achiness
    - Gastrointestinal signs and symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain
    - Respiratory signs and symptoms, including dyspnea, cough, or pharyngitis
    - Laboratory and radiologic abnormalities, including elevated liver function tests, elevated creatine phosphokinase, elevated creatinine, lymphopenia, and pulmonary infiltrates. Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis—including fatal cases—also have been reported. Pancreatitis with laboratory abnormalities can occur.

  If an HSR is suspected, ABC **should be stopped immediately and not restarted because hypotension and death may occur upon rechallenge.**
- *Rare:* Increased levels of liver enzymes, elevated blood glucose levels, and elevated triglycerides (see information on cardiovascular risk under Safety in Children and Adolescents below). Pancreatitis, lactic acidosis, and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis—including fatal cases—have been reported.

- *Rare*: Drug reaction (or rash) with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms, or DRESS, syndrome.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

ABC is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children with HIV aged ≥3 months as part of the nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) component of antiretroviral therapy (ART). The World Health Organization (WHO), however, provides dosing guidance for ABC as a component of the NRTI backbone for full-term neonates starting at birth and weighing ≥2 kg (see Annex 1: Dosages for ARV Drugs in the WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery, and Monitoring). The WHO guidance for ABC dosing in neonates increases the choices of antiretroviral (ARV) agents for the management of newborns in special situations in which stock-outs of nevirapine or zidovudine (ZDV) may affect the ability to effectively provide postnatal prophylaxis or treatment of neonatal HIV. The WHO recommendation of ABC dosing for infants starting at 1 month of age is based on the inclusion of ABC as a preferred NRTI component of the first- and second-line ARV regimens for children in the WHO guidance. This recommendation also takes into account the availability of pediatric generic ABC formulations tentatively approved in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—including coformulations that include 3TC—and the cost of ARV drugs in resource-limited settings.

Efficacy

Both the once-daily and twice-daily doses of ABC have demonstrated durable antiviral efficacy in pediatric clinical trials, comparable to the efficacy observed for other NRTIs in children.[7-11] In an observational study of nine cohorts from the International epidemiology Databases to Evaluate AIDS Southern Africa (IeDEA-SA) collaboration, 6- and 12-month viral suppression rates (<400 copies/mL) were evaluated among infants who initiated ART at age <3 months and compared with viral suppression rates among infants aged <28 days and ≥28 days and weighing <3 kg and ≥3 kg at the time of ART initiation. Viral suppression at 12 months did not differ by age or weight at the time of ART initiation and was slightly lower in infants on ABC (174/329 [53%]) than in infants on ZDV (77/138 [56%]) (adjusted odds ratio 1.8; 95% confidence interval (CI), 1.0–3.2).[12]

Pharmacokinetics

Pharmacokinetics in Neonates and Infants

The International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) P1106 trial reported PK data in 25 infants aged <3 months with HIV who were initiated on a median ABC dose of 10 mg/kg (range 6–13 mg/kg) twice daily in combination with 3TC and LPV/r after 1 month of life. Median age was 6 weeks (range 1.5–11 weeks); median weight was 2,250 g (range 1,360–3,320 g); and median gestational age was 36 weeks (range 27–39 weeks). Sparse and predose PK

ABC samples were obtained repeatedly over the 24 weeks of study follow-up. ABC plasma exposures were high compared with published data on infants aged >3 months and decreased rapidly between 2 and 8 months of age as the infants matured and ABC clearance increased.[13] In the Tygerberg cohort study from South Africa, 10 healthy term neonates at the median postnatal age of 10 days (range 6–15 days) who were administered a single ABC dose of 8 mg/kg before 15 days of life had substantially higher exposures than those observed in infants and children and no reported adverse events.[14] The higher ABC exposure levels in neonates compared with infants and children are likely due to slower drug clearance through immature enzyme pathways.

PK modeling of ABC starting at birth has been conducted using pooled data from 308 ABC concentration measurements obtained from three studies administering ABC liquid to 45 young infants (including 21 full-term neonates <15 days of age with intensive PK).[14] Two of these studies, the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (PACTG) 321 study and the Tygerberg cohort, performed intensive PK sampling in full-term neonates receiving ABC for HIV prophylaxis. The third study, IMPAACT P1106, described above, performed sparse PK sampling on full-term and low birth weight (LBW; <2,500 g) infants with HIV. LBW infants were older at the first PK assessment, with a median postnatal age of 73 days (range 41–190 days) and weight of 3.8 kg (range 2.4–5.8 kg). ABC PK parameters in neonates were estimated using PK simulations to achieve plasma ABC exposures (area under the curve from time zero to 12 hours after drug administration; $AUC_{0–12}$) within the expected adult range (3.2–25.2 mcg·hr/mL). The PK model predicted a slow ABC clearance of 2.51 mL/min per kg at birth, which doubled by 4 weeks of age. Simulations predicted that an ABC dose of 2 mg/kg twice daily in full-term neonates from birth to <4 weeks and an ABC dose of 4 mg/kg twice daily in infants aged 4 to 12 weeks would achieve target $AUC_{0–12}$; however, data in LBW infants are lacking.[14] Based on these data, the weight-band dosing of ABC for neonates has been developed for neonates from birth to age <1 month and is included in the WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery, and Monitoring.[15] This weight-band dosing for neonates approximates the ABC dosing per kg based on the postnatal age (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Simplified Weight-Band Dosing for Full-Term Neonates From Birth to <1 Month of Age (WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery, and Monitoring, Annex 1: Table A1.4)

Birth to <1 Month of Age		
Weight	Volume of ABC Oral Solution 20 mg/mL Twice Daily[a,b]	ABC Dose in mg Twice Daily (ranges mg/kg, from lowest to highest weight within the weight band)[a,b]
2 kg to <3 kg	0.4 mL	8 mg (4.0–2.8 mg/kg)
3 kg to <4 kg	0.5 mL	10 mg (3.3–2.6 mg/kg)
4 kg to <5 kg	0.6 mL	12 mg (3.0–2.4 mg/kg)

[a] Simplified weight-band dosing exceeds recommended mg/kg ABC dosing in neonates and infants.

[b] Neonatal ABC dose is based on birth weight and does not require weight-based adjustment during the first month of life.

Key: ABC = abacavir

The PETITE trial, a recent open-label, two-stage, single-arm, Phase 1/2 PK and safety study, evaluated the generic fixed-dose combination (FDC) of ABC/3TC (120/60 mg) double-scored dispersible tablets and LPV/r (40/10 mg) granules in 24 neonates with HIV exposure (≥37 weeks' gestational age; birth weight 2,000–4,000 g) in South Africa.[16] Following a dose-finding cohort of 8 neonates, 16 neonates received an ABC/3TC dose of 30/15 mg once daily starting between 9 and 59 hours of life and continuing through 28 days of life. No PK data were collected among neonates younger than 6 days of age. As anticipated, geometric mean ABC and 3TC exposures (area under the curve from time zero to 24 hours after drug administration) were higher at 6 to 14 days (51.7 mg·h/L for ABC and 17.2 mg·h/L for 3TC) than at 19 to 24 days of age (25.0 mg·h/L for ABC and 11.3 mg·h/L for 3TC). High ABC and 3TC exposures during the first 2 weeks of life are likely due to the relatively high dose imposed by the currently available generic pediatric FDC (i.e., 10 mg/kg ABC and 5 mg/kg 3TC for a neonate weighing 3 kg). However, due to the rapid maturation of enzymes involved in ABC metabolism, exposures rapidly decreased to within target ranges without a safety signal.[17]

For infants aged ≥1 month with weight 3 kg to <6 kg, the WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Service Delivery, and Monitoring currently recommend a twice-daily dose of 3 mL (60 mg) of ABC 20 mg/mL solution (range 10–20 mg/kg/dose). The weight-band dosing for infants with weight 3 kg to <6 kg within the WHO pediatric HIV guidelines is higher than the modeled weight-based dosing and is based on the practical considerations of the generic fixed-dose pediatric formulations available in resource-limited settings.[18] As new generic pediatric formulations of ABC become available in resource-limited settings, there is potential for the revision of the WHO guidelines for weight-band dosing of ABC for young infants.

Based on PK modeling from three infant studies[14] and neonatal and infant safety data from the IMPAACT 1106 study and two observational cohort studies (see Safety in Neonates and Infants below), the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends an ABC dose of 2 mg/kg twice daily for neonates from birth to <1 month of age and an ABC dose of 4 mg/kg twice daily for full-term infants aged ≥1 month and <3 months.

Pharmacokinetics in Children

PK studies of ABC in children aged <12 years have demonstrated that metabolic clearance of ABC in adolescents and young adults (aged 13–25 years) is slower than that observed in younger children and approximates clearance seen in older adults.[19]

The PKs of ABC administered once daily in children with HIV aged 3 months through 12 years were evaluated in three crossover open-label PK trials of twice-daily versus once-daily dosing of ABC and 3TC (PENTA 13 [n = 14], PENTA 15 [n = 18], and ARROW [n = 36]).[5,20-23] The data from these three pediatric trials were used to develop a model for ABC PKs. This model predicted that systemic plasma ABC exposure after once-daily dosing would be equivalent to the exposure seen after twice-daily dosing in infants and children aged ≤12 years.[20-24] Both the trials and PK modeling have demonstrated that once-daily dosing with either the tablet or the liquid formulation of ABC produces plasma exposures comparable to those seen with a twice-daily dosing schedule that uses the same total daily dose of ABC.[5]

Dosing

Dosing and Formulations

A total daily dose of ABC 600 mg can be used safely in a person weighing 25 kg.[5] Doses of the liquid ABC formulation are similar to those used for weight-band dosing with tablet formulations and should be considered for use in younger children who are unable to swallow a pill.[25]

In the three ABC dosing pediatric trials described above,[20-23] only children who had low viral loads and who were clinically stable on the twice-daily dose of ABC were eligible to change to once-daily ABC dosing. Efficacy data from a 48-week follow-up in the ARROW trial demonstrated clinical non-inferiority of once-daily ABC (n = 336) versus twice-daily ABC (n = 333) in tablet form combined with a once-daily or twice-daily 3TC-based ARV regimen.[11] To date, no clinical trials have been conducted involving children who initiated therapy with once-daily dosing of the ABC liquid formulation. In children who can be treated with pill formulations, initiating therapy with once-daily dosing of ABC at a dose of 16 mg/kg (with a maximum dose of ABC 600 mg) is recommended. However, twice-daily dosing is recommended for infants and young children who initiate therapy with the liquid formulation of ABC. Switching to once-daily dosing with the liquid formulation could be considered when harmonizing with other antiretroviral drugs administered once daily, such as 3TC and dolutegravir (DTG).

Recent data from the IMPAACT 2019 clinical trial of dispersible and immediate-release ABC/DTG/3TC tablets in children with HIV have validated the FDA-approved dosing in infants and children weighing 10 kg to <25 kg and have led to a newly proposed dosing of this FDC—three tablets once daily of ABC 60 mg, DTG 5 mg, and 3TC 30 mg dispersed in 15 to 20 mL of water—in infants aged ≥3 months weighing 6 kg to <10 kg.[5,26,27] ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible FDC dosing was developed based on PK and safety data in each weight band at the originally selected dosing, which aligned with WHO weight-band dosing for the individual ARV agents. In a population PK (popPK) model based on the IMPAACT 2019 results, ABC, DTG, and 3TC PK exposures following once-daily ABC/DTG/3TC (60 mg/5 mg/30 mg) dispersible tablet dosing were comparable to those observed in pediatrics and adults with single entities, supporting the extrapolation of adult efficacy data.[27] Follow-up through 24 weeks confirmed the safety, tolerability, and virological efficacy of both formulations.[26]

PopPK models of ABC, DTG, and 3TC were then further extended to evaluate whether a single ABC/DTG/3TC (60 mg/5 mg/30 mg) tablet in infants aged ≥4 weeks and weighing ≥3 kg to <6 kg could achieve drug exposures comparable to those observed in older children and adults based on dosing simulations, thus providing comparable safety and efficacy. These models applied maturation functions to the DTG, ABC, and 3TC models and used data from young children across weight bands from the IMPAACT 2019 (≥6 kg), P1093 (≥3 kg), and ODYSSEY (≥3 kg) clinical trials for DTG and the PETITE clinical trial for ABC and 3TC.[27] ABC/3TC data from the PETITE study in neonates[14,17] and available ABC, 3TC, and DTG safety data in infants <3 months (see Safety in Neonates and Infants below) were used to interpolate safety for infants aged ≥4 weeks to <3 months and suggested no safety concerns for coadministration of ABC/3TC/DTG in young infants. Notably, doses in the safety evaluation mostly aligned with WHO weight-band dose recommendations for fixed-dose formulations of ABC/3TC 120 mg/60 mg, which were higher than the weight bands under evaluation in this modeling and simulation. Panel members agree that, based on these findings, the fixed-dose formulation of the single ABC/3TC/DTG dispersible tablet may be considered as an alternative to separate formulations of ABC, 3TC, and DTG in infants weighing ≥3 kg to <6 kg and aged ≥4 weeks to facilitate treatment adherence.

Toxicity

Safety in Neonates and Infants

Data from the PACTG 321, the IMPAACT P1106 trial, and two observational European and African cohorts provided reassuring data on the safety of ABC in infants when initiated at <3 months of age, including infants with weight <3 kg.[12,13,28] The IMPAACT P1106 trial reported 24 weeks of safety data in 27 infants in whom repeated dosing of ABC was initiated at the median age of 60 days. Fifteen infants (55.6%; 90% CI, 38.3–72.0) met the safety endpoint of death or a Grade 3 or higher adverse event (AE). None of the AEs were related to ABC, and none led to interruptions or adjustments of ABC dosing. No hypersensitivity reactions were reported with the multi-dose treatment.[13] In two cohorts of neonates (<1 month of age) who received a single ABC dose, ABC was well tolerated; all reported AEs in the PACTG 321 study were unrelated to ABC, and no AEs were reported in the Tygerberg cohort.[14]

The PETITE trial of generic FDC of ABC/3TC (120/60 mg) double-scored dispersible tablets and LPV/r (40/10 mg) granules in 24 neonates from South Africa reported no Grade 2 or worse AEs related to study drugs. One neonate had a Grade 1 prolonged corrected QT interval that spontaneously resolved.[17]

The European Pregnancy and Paediatric Infections Cohort Collaboration (EPPICC) reported safety outcomes among 139 children from 13 cohorts in 11 countries in Europe who initiated ABC at age <3 months. By 12 months on ABC, 3.6% (n = 4) had discontinued ABC because of an ART safety concern, and 11.8% (n = 15) discontinued ABC for any reason.[28] Another observational study of nine cohorts from the IeDEA-SA collaboration compared safety outcomes (measured as ABC discontinuations and their reasons) between infants who started ABC aged <28 days (n = 232) and those aged ≥28 days (n = 605), and between infants who started ABC with weight <3 kg (n = 53) and those with weight ≥3 kg (n = 784) at the time of ABC initiation.[12] ABC discontinuations at 6 and 12 months were not significantly different in infants who started ART aged <28 days versus ≥28 days or in infants who weighed <3 kg versus ≥3 kg. ABC discontinuations were less frequent than ZDV discontinuations (adjusted hazard ratio 0.14, 95% CI, 0.10–0.20).[12]

Safety in Children and Adolescents

ABC has less of an effect on mitochondrial function than the NRTI ZDV[7,8] and less bone and renal toxicity than tenofovir disoproxil fumarate.[29,30]

A systematic review and meta-analysis of 54 full-text articles reporting on observational and experimental studies that were conducted in infants, children, and adolescents with HIV aged 10 to 19 years, included data on safety, efficacy, or both, and were published in 2009–2022 in English or French concluded that toxic effects due to ABC use in infants, children, and adolescents remain rare and manageable.[31]

Several observational cohort studies, including contemporary cohort analyses, suggest that an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) events—such as myocardial infarction, stroke, and invasive cardiovascular procedure—exists in adults who are currently using ABC or who have recently used ABC (see Cardiovascular Risk in Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor Options as Part of Initial Therapy in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines); however, other studies have not substantiated this finding. Limited data are available on the CVD risks associated with ABC use in children. One cohort study of South African adolescents (385 participants with HIV and 63 participants as HIV-negative controls) with a median age of 12 years reported an association between ABC exposure and insulin resistance, which was evaluated using homeostatic model assessment. These findings suggested that ABC use may be a CVD risk factor for young people with perinatally acquired HIV.[32] In a recent prospective study of 101 virally suppressed (≤400 copies/mL) youth aged 10 to 18 years with HIV and 97 uninfected controls from Uganda, the baseline common carotid artery intima-media thickness (IMT) was slightly higher in participants with HIV than in controls ($P < 0.01$), and pulse wave velocity (PWV) did not differ between groups. In longitudinal analyses, the longer ART duration was associated with lower PWV in youth with HIV ($\beta = 0.008$ [95% CI, -0.008 to 0.003]), while ABC use was associated with greater IMT in youth with HIV ($\beta = 0.043$ [95% CI, 0.012–0.074]). These findings suggest that in adolescents with HIV, early prolonged ART may prevent progression of subclinical vascular disease, while prolonged ABC use may increase it.[33]

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Emtricitabine (FTC, Emtriva)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Pediatric Oral Solution: 10 mg/mL
 	
Capsule: 200 mg
 	
Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets
• [Generic] Efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
• [Biktarvy]
  o Bictegravir 50 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
  o Bictegravir 30 mg/emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg
• [Complera] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
• [Descovy]
  o Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
  o Emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg
• [Genvoya] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg
• [Odefsey] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
• [Stribild] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
• [Symtuza] Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg
• [Truvada]
  o Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
  o Emtricitabine 167 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 250 mg
  o Emtricitabine 133 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 200 mg
  o Emtricitabine 100 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 150 mg
 	
When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of the Drug Appendix for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.
 	
For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations	Selected Adverse Events
Neonatal and Infant (Aged 0 to <3 Months) Dose *Oral Solution* • Emtricitabine (FTC) 3 mg/kg once daily	• Hyperpigmentation/skin discoloration on palms and/or soles

Child (**Aged ≥3** Months) and Adolescent Dose

Oral Solution

- FTC 6 mg/kg once daily (maximum 240 mg per dose). The maximum dose of oral solution is higher than the capsule dose because a pediatric pharmacokinetic analysis reported that the plasma exposure for FTC was 20% lower in children who received the oral solution than in children who received the capsule formulation.

Capsules (for Children Weighing >33 kg)

- FTC 200 mg once daily

Adult Dose

Oral Solution for People Who Are Unable to Swallow Capsules

- FTC 240 mg (24 mL) once daily

Capsules

- FTC 200 mg once daily

[Generic] Efavirenz (EFV)/FTC/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Take on an empty stomach.

[Biktarvy] Bictegravir/FTC/Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF)

Neonate or Child (Aged <2 Years and Weighing <14 kg) Dose

- No data are available on the appropriate dose of Biktarvy in children aged <2 years and weighing <14 kg. Studies are currently being conducted to identify the appropriate dose for this age and weight group.

Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily, with or without food.

Body Weight	Dose
≥14 kg to <25 kg	Bictegravir 30 mg/emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg
≥25 kg	Bictegravir 50 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg

Special Instructions

- Although FTC can be administered without regard to food, some FDC tablet formulations that contain FTC have food requirements.
- FTC oral solution can be kept at room temperature, up to 77°F (25°C), if used within 3 months; refrigerate oral solution for long-term storage.
- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FTC or FDC tablets that contain FTC. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when FTC is discontinued; therefore, hepatic function and hepatitis B viral load should be monitored for several months after children with HBV infection stop taking FTC.

Metabolism/Elimination

- No CYP interactions
- Eighty-six percent of FTC is excreted in urine. FTC may compete with other compounds that undergo renal elimination.

FTC Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- EFV/FTC/TDF should be used with caution in children with hepatic impairment.
- Biktarvy, Genvoya, Stribild, and Symtuza are not recommended for use in children with severe hepatic impairment.
- Complera, Descovy, and Odefsey do not require dose adjustment in mild or moderate hepatic impairment but should not be used in children with severe hepatic impairment because they have not been studied in this group.

FTC Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment

- Decrease the dose of FTC in children with impaired renal function. Consult the manufacturer's prescribing information for recommended dose adjustments.
- Do not use the FDC tablets EFV/FTC/TDF or Complera in children with creatinine clearance (CrCl) <50 mL/min or in children who require dialysis.
- Do not use the FDC tablets Truvada or Biktarvy in children with CrCl <30 mL/min. Do not use Truvada in children who require dialysis.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Biktarvy for use only in people who are antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive or to replace the current antiretroviral (ARV) regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Biktarvy. Some members of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommend the use of Biktarvy in children with prior treatment failure and who have virus containing the M184V mutation.
- See the Bictegravir section for additional information.

[Complera] FTC/Rilpivirine (RPV)/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily in people who are ART-naive who have baseline plasma HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL. This dose of Complera also can be used to replace a stable ARV regimen in people who are currently on their first or second regimen and who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Complera.
- Administer with a meal of at least 500 calories.

[Descovy] FTC/TAF

Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

Body Weight	Dose
≥14 kg to <25 kg	FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg, in combination with an integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) or a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). In this weight band, Descovy should not be used with protease inhibitors (PIs) that require a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A inhibitor (e.g., ritonavir [RTV] or cobicistat [COBI]).
≥25 kg to <35 kg	FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg, in combination with an INSTI or an NNRTI. In this weight band, Descovy should not be used with PIs that require a CYP3A inhibitor (i.e., RTV or COBI).
≥35 kg	FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg, in combination with an INSTI, NNRTI, or boosted PI.

- Stribild should not be initiated in children with estimated CrCl <70 mL/min and should be discontinued in children with estimated CrCl <50 mL/min.
- TAF-containing formulations are not recommended for use in children with estimated CrCl <30 mL/min.

[Genvoya] Elvitegravir (EVG)/COBI/FTC/TAF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food in people who are ART-naive. This dose of Genvoya also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Genvoya.

[Odefsey] FTC/RPV/TAF

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily in people who are ART-naive with HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL. This dose of Odefsey also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Odefsey.
- Administer with a meal of at least 500 calories.

[Stribild] EVG/COBI/FTC/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg With a Sexual Maturity Rating of 4 or 5) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food in people who are ART-naive. This dose of Stribild also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Stribild.

[Symtuza] Darunavir (DRV)/COBI/FTC/TAF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food in people who are ART-naive or in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no known mutations associated with resistance to DRV or tenofovir.

[Truvada] FTC/TDF

Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

Body Weight	FTC/TDF Tablet Once Daily
17 kg to <22 kg	One FTC 100 mg/TDF 150 mg tablet
22 kg to <28 kg	One FTC 133 mg/TDF 200 mg tablet
28 kg to <35 kg	One FTC 167 mg/TDF 250 mg tablet
≥35 kg and adults	One FTC 200 mg/TDF 300 mg tablet

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs):* **Do not use** emtricitabine (FTC) in combination with lamivudine (3TC), because these agents share similar resistance profiles and lack additive benefit. **Do not use FTC** with fixed-dose combination (FDC) medications that contain 3TC or FTC. See Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class, and refer to other sections of the Drug Appendix for drug interaction information for each individual component of an FDC tablet.
- *Renal elimination:* FTC may compete with other compounds that undergo renal tubular secretion. Drugs that decrease renal function could decrease clearance of FTC.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Headache, insomnia, diarrhea, nausea, rash. Hyperpigmentation/skin discoloration, which may be more common in children than in adults.
- *Less common (more severe):* Neutropenia. Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported. Exacerbations of hepatitis have occurred in people with hepatitis B virus (HBV)/HIV coinfection who switched from regimens that included FTC to regimens that did not include FTC.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

FTC is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for once-daily administration in children, starting at birth. FTC often is used as part of a dual-NRTI backbone in antiretroviral (ARV) regimens for children and adolescents because of its once-daily dosing, minimal toxicity, and favorable pediatric pharmacokinetic (PK) data.

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics

Comparative Clinical Trials

Studies that assess the efficacy and/or potency of nucleoside/nucleotide analogues have been more concerned with the dynamic components of the regimen—such as tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), tenofovir alafenamide, or abacavir—than the more static components, such as FTC or 3TC. FTC and 3TC have been considered interchangeable, but data to support this conclusion are lacking. Investigators studying the AIDS Therapy Evaluation in the Netherlands (ATHENA) cohort

compared the efficacy of TDF plus FTC with TDF plus 3TC when these drugs were administered with a ritonavir-boosted protease inhibitor (darunavir, atazanavir, or lopinavir) in participants who were antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive.[1] The adjusted hazard ratio for the virologic failure of 3TC-containing regimens compared with FTC-containing regimens within 240 weeks of starting therapy was 1.15 (95% confidence interval, 0.58–2.27). No difference between these regimens was observed in the time to virologic suppression during the first 48 weeks of therapy or time to virologic failure after attaining suppression. A Swiss cohort study found a potential difference in efficacy between FTC and 3TC; however, the difference disappeared after adjusting for pill burden.[2] Current evidence suggests that FTC and 3TC have equivalent efficacy and toxicity in people without ARV experience.

Efficacy

Following a dose-finding study (described in the Pharmacokinetics: Liquid Versus Capsule section below),[3] a once-daily dose of FTC 6 mg/kg administered in combination with other ARV drugs was studied in 116 infants, children, and adolescents aged 3 months to 16 years.[4] The study used a maximum dose of 240 mg of the FTC liquid formulation. PK results showed that the plasma exposures seen in these children and adolescents were similar to those seen in adults who received FTC 200 mg once daily. Follow-up data extending to Week 96 indicated that 89% of ART-naive children and 76% of ARV-experienced children maintained plasma HIV RNA <400 copies/mL (75% of ARV-naive children and 67% of ARV-experienced children had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL). Minimal toxicity was observed during this trial. The Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (PACTG) P1021 trial[5] evaluated the use of FTC 6 mg/kg (with a maximum dose of FTC 200 mg per day of the liquid formulation) as part of a three-drug regimen dosed once daily to ARV-naive children aged 3 months to 21 years. In this trial, 85% of children achieved HIV RNA <400 copies/mL, and 72% of children maintained virologic suppression (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) through 96 weeks of therapy. The median CD4 T lymphocyte count rose by 329 cells/mm^3 at Week 96.

Pharmacokinetics: Liquid Versus Capsule

A single-dose PK study of the FTC oral solution and FTC capsules enrolled 25 children with HIV aged 2 years to 17 years.[3] FTC was found to be well absorbed following oral administration, with a mean elimination half-life of 11 hours (range 9.7–11.6 hours). Plasma concentrations in children who received the once-daily dose of FTC 6 mg/kg were approximately equivalent to those seen in adults who received the standard dose of FTC 200 mg. However, plasma concentrations of FTC after administration of the capsule formulation were approximately 20% higher than those observed after administration of the oral solution in this small cohort of children.

Pharmacokinetics in Infants

A study in South Africa evaluated the PK of FTC in 20 infants aged <3 months with perinatal HIV exposure. The participants received a dose of FTC 3 mg/kg once daily for two 4-day courses, separated by an interval of ≥2 weeks.[6] FTC exposure (area under the curve [AUC]) in neonates receiving FTC 3 mg/kg once daily was within the range of exposures seen in children aged >3 months who received the recommended dose of FTC 6 mg/kg once daily and adults who received the recommended dose of FTC 200 mg once daily. During the first 3 months of life, FTC AUC decreased with increasing age, correlating with an increase in total body clearance of the drug. In a small group of neonates (n = 6) who received a single dose of FTC 3 mg/kg and whose mothers received a single dose of FTC 600 mg during delivery, the FTC AUC exceeded the AUC seen in adults and older children. However, FTC had a half-life of 9.2 hours in these neonates, which is

similar to that observed in adults and older children.[7] Extensive safety data are lacking for this age range.

Considerations for Use

The FTC oral solution has an advantage over the liquid formulation of 3TC because it can be given once daily at ARV initiation, whereas the liquid formulation of 3TC needs to be given twice daily at ARV initiation. When pill formulations of 3TC or FTC are used, they can be administered once daily.

Both FTC and 3TC have antiviral activity and efficacy against HBV. For a comprehensive review of this topic, see the Hepatitis B Virus section in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines.

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Lamivudine (3TC, Epivir)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations
Pediatric Oral Solution • [Epivir] 10 mg/mL • [Epivir HBV][a] 5 mg/mL Tablets • [Epivir] 150 mg (scored) and 300 mg • [Epivir HBV][a] 100 mg Generic Formulations • 100-mg, 150-mg, and 300-mg tablets Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets • [Cimduo] Lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg • [Lamivudine 150 mg/zidovudine 300 mg • [Delstrigo] Doravirine 100 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg • [Dovato] Dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg • Abacavir 600 mg/lamivudine 300 mg • [Symfi] Efavirenz 600 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg • Efavirenz 400 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg • [Temixys] Lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg • [Triumeq] Abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg • [Triumeq PD] Abacavir 60 mg/dolutegravir 5 mg/lamivudine 30 mg When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents. For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: See Antiretroviral Management of Infants With In Utero, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV and Table 13.1. Drug Dosing Recommendations for Antiretroviral Prophylaxis and Presumptive HIV Therapy in Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV for information about using lamivudine (3TC) to prevent perinatal HIV transmission.

Neonate (≥32 Weeks Gestation at Birth) and Infant (Birth to <4 Weeks) Dose

Oral Solution

- 3TC 2 mg/kg twice daily

Infant and Child Dose

- Once-daily dosing of the 3TC oral solution is not recommended when initiating 3TC oral solution in infants and young children. Patients can be transitioned to once-daily treatment with the oral solution when they have been stable on twice-daily treatment for 36 weeks and are aged ≥3 years. Please see the note below and refer to the text for more detail.

Aged ≥4 Weeks to <3 Months

- 3TC 4 mg/kg twice daily of the oral solution

Aged ≥3 Months to <3 Years

- 3TC 5 mg/kg twice daily of the oral solution (maximum 150 mg per dose)

Aged ≥3 Years

- 3TC 5 mg/kg twice daily of the oral solution (maximum 150 mg per dose); *or*
- 3TC 10 mg/kg once daily of the oral solution (maximum 300 mg per dose)

Weight-Band Dosing for the 10-mg/mL 3TC Oral Solution in Children Weighing ≥3 kg and Aged ≥4 Weeks

Weight	Twice-Daily Dose, AM	Twice-Daily Dose, PM
3 kg to <6 kg	3 mL	3 mL
6 kg to <10 kg	4 mL	4 mL
10 kg to <14 kg	6 mL	6 mL

Note: Weight-band dosing in the table above is derived from World Health Organization recommendations. These doses result in significantly higher 3TC exposure than mg per kg doses, especially for young infants. However, given that 3TC has a generally favorable safety profile, these doses are thought to be safe and can be used as

Selected Adverse Events

- Headache

Special Instructions

- 3TC and coformulated tablets can be given with and without food.
- Store 3TC oral solution at room temperature.
- For abacavir (ABC)/dolutegravir (DTG)/3TC dispersible tablets, fully disperse them in 20 mL of drinking water in the supplied cup and swirl the suspension so that no lumps remain. After full dispersion and within 30 minutes of mixing, administer the oral suspension. Rinse the dosing cup with a small amount of water, and give this additional water to the child to ensure that the child takes the full dose and no medication remains in the dosing cup. ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible tablets should not be swallowed whole, chewed, cut, or crushed.
- Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using 3TC or FDC tablets that contain 3TC. Severe acute exacerbations of HBV can occur after discontinuation of 3TC. Hepatic function and HBV viral load should be monitored for several months after patients with HBV infection stop taking 3TC. Patients with HBV/HIV coinfection who receive Dovato will require additional treatment for chronic HBV infection.
- For any FDC tablet containing ABC, test patients for the HLA-B*5701 allele before starting therapy to predict the risk of hypersensitivity reactions. Patients who test positive for the HLA-B*5701 allele should not be given an ABC-containing FDC. Patients with no prior HLA-B*5701 testing who are tolerating an ABC-containing regimen do not need to be tested. See Abacavir.

Metabolism/Elimination

3TC Dosing in Patients **With Hepatic** Impairment

- No change in 3TC dosing is required for patients with hepatic impairment.
- FDC tablets containing ABC or ZDV should not be used in patients who have impaired hepatic function.

soon as infants weigh ≥3 kg and are aged ≥4 weeks.

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Weighing ≥14 kg and Able to Swallow Tablets

- Weight-band dosing (see table below; dose is approximately 3TC 5 mg/kg per day twice daily or 3TC 10 mg/kg once daily)
- The scored tablet is the preferred formulation for pediatric patients weighing ≥14 kg who can swallow a tablet.

Weight-Band Dosing for the Scored 150-mg 3TC Tablet in Children Weighing ≥14 kg

Weight	Twice-Daily Dose, AM	Twice-Daily Dose, PM	Once-Daily Dose
14 kg to <20 kg	½ tablet (75 mg)	½ tablet (75 mg)	1 tablet (150 mg)
≥20 kg to <25 kg	½ tablet (75 mg)	1 tablet (150 mg)	1½ tablets (225 mg)
≥25 kg	1 tablet (150 mg)	1 tablet (150 mg)	2 tablets (300 mg)

Note: The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) supports switching from twice-daily dosing to once-daily dosing of 3TC (using the oral solution or tablets) in children aged ≥3 years who have been clinically stable for 36 weeks with undetectable viral loads and stable CD4 T lymphocyte cell counts. Clinicians should choose a once-daily regimen using the once-daily dose of 3TC indicated above (approximately 3TC 10 mg/kg, with a maximum of 3TC 300 mg once daily).

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- 3TC 150 mg twice daily; *or*
- 3TC 300 mg once daily

[Cimduo] **3TC**/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing >35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily

3TC/Zidovudine (ZDV)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥30 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet twice daily
- Symfi (EFV 600 mg/3TC/TDF) and the FDC containing EFV 400 mg/3TC/TDF should be used with caution in patients with hepatic impairment; these FDCs are not recommended for use in moderate or severe hepatic impairment.
- Delstrigo and Dovato do not require dose adjustment in mild or moderate hepatic impairment but have not been studied and, therefore, are not recommended in patients with severe hepatic impairment.

3TC Dosing in Patients **With** Renal Impairment

- Dose adjustment of 3TC is required for patients with renal insufficiency.
- Do not use FDC tablets containing 3TC in patients with creatinine clearance <30 mL/min or patients on dialysis because the doses of 3TC cannot be adjusted. Data from the FDC DTG/3TC (Dovato) suggest that patients with a sustained creatinine clearance of 30–49 mL/min may experience a higher 3TC exposure and should be monitored for hematologic toxicities and potential FDC discontinuation and subsequent adjustment of the treatment regimen. See package inserts for additional information.

[Delstrigo] Doravirine/**3TC**/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily in antiretroviral (ARV)-naive patients and ARV-experienced patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Delstrigo

[Dovato] Dolutegravir (DTG)/**3TC**

Adolescent (Weighing ≥25kg and aged ≥12 years) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with or without food as a complete ARV regimen in antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive adults and adolescents with no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Dovato.
- The combination tablet DTG/3TC (Dovato) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for adolescents weighing ≥25 kg and aged ≥12 years but is not approved for use in children aged <12 years. However, it could be used as part of a three-drug regimen in patients who meet the minimum body weight requirements for each component of the drug.

Abacavir (**ABC**)/**3TC**

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily

[Symfi] Efavirenz (EFV) **600 mg/3TC**/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily on an empty stomach

EFV **400 mg/3TC**/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily on an empty stomach
- The FDC containing 400mg EFV/3TC/TDF has not been studied in children (sexual maturity ratings [SMRs] 1–3), and major interindividual variability in EFV plasma concentrations has been found in pediatric patients in a multiethnic setting. The 400-mg dose of EFV may be too low in children or adolescents with SMRs 1 to 3 who weigh ≥40 kg. The use of therapeutic drug monitoring is suggested by some Panel members when this FDC is used in pediatric patients who weigh ≥40 kg (see the Efavirenz section for more information).

[Temixys] **3TC**/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily

[Triumeq PD] A**BC**/DTG/**3TC**

Child Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg and Aged ≥3 Months

- Dispersible Triumeq PD tablets are FDA approved for children weighing ≥6 to <25 kg. Triumeq PD is not recommended for children weighing ≥25 kg who are eligible for adult Triumeq dosing.
- Administer the appropriate number of tablets for a child's weight once daily, dispersed in 20 mL of water. See Special Instructions. Triumeq PD tablets should not be swallowed whole, chewed, cut, or crushed.

Weight-Band Dosing of Triumeq PD Tablets for Children Weighing ≥6 kg

Weight	Recommended Daily Dose	Number of Triumeq PD Tablets
6 kg to <10 kg	ABC 180 mg DTG 15 mg 3TC 90 mg	3
10 kg to <14 kg	ABC 240 mg DTG 20 mg 3TC 120 mg	4
14 kg to <20 kg	ABC 300 mg DTG 25 mg 3TC 150 mg	5
20 kg to <25 kg	ABC 360 mg DTG 30 mg 3TC 180 mg	6
≥25 kg	Use Triumeq (see below).	

- For use in children who are ARV-naive or ARV-experienced (but integrase strand transfer inhibitor [INSTI]-naive) and who are not being treated with uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1 (UGT1A1) or cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A inducers

[Triumeq] **ABC**/DTG/**3TC**

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- This FDC tablet can be used in patients who are ART-naive or ART-experienced (but INSTI-naive) and who are not being treated with UGT1A1 or CYP3A inducers.

[a] Epivir HBV oral solution and tablets contain a lower amount of 3TC than Epivir oral solution and tablets. The amount of 3TC in the Epivir HBV solution and tablet was based on dosing for treatment of HBV infection in people without HIV coinfection. Patients with HIV who are taking Epivir HBV as part of their ARV regimen should receive the appropriate amount of oral solution or the appropriate number of tablets to achieve the higher doses of 3TC that are used to treat HIV.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Drugs that decrease renal function could decrease clearance of lamivudine (3TC).
- **Do not use** 3TC in combination with emtricitabine (FTC) because these drugs have similar resistance profiles and using them together offers no additional benefit.[1] **Do not use** 3TC with fixed-dose combination (FDC) medications that contain 3TC or FTC. Please see Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class and refer to other sections of the Drug Appendix for drug interaction information about each individual component of FDC tablets.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Headache, nausea
- *Less common (more severe):* Peripheral neuropathy, lipodystrophy/lipoatrophy
- *Rare:* Increased levels of liver enzymes. Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Although 3TC is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of children aged ≥3 months, both the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) and the Panel on Treatment of HIV During Pregnancy and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission recommend the use of 3TC from birth based on extensive experience, as well as safety and pharmacokinetic (PK) data in this age group.

Considerations for Use

The efficacy and toxicity of 3TC are equivalent to the efficacy and toxicity of FTC. The oral formulation of FTC has an advantage over the liquid formulation of 3TC because it can be given once daily at antiretroviral (ARV) initiation, whereas the liquid formulation of 3TC needs to be given twice daily at ARV initiation. When pill formulations of 3TC or FTC are used, they can be administered once daily.

Both FTC and 3TC have antiviral activity and efficacy against hepatitis B virus. For a comprehensive review of this topic, see the Hepatitis B Virus section in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines.

Comparative Clinical Trials

Investigators studying the AIDS Therapy Evaluation in the Netherlands (ATHENA) cohort compared the efficacy of tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) plus FTC to TDF plus 3TC when these drugs were administered with a ritonavir-boosted protease inhibitor (darunavir, atazanavir, or lopinavir) in

ART-naive patients.[2] The adjusted hazard ratio for the virologic failure of 3TC-containing regimens compared to FTC-containing regimens within 240 weeks of starting therapy was 1.15 (95% confidence interval, 0.58–2.27). These regimens had no difference in time to virologic suppression during the first 48 weeks of therapy or time to virologic failure after attaining suppression. In a Swiss cohort, Yang et al. found a potential difference in efficacy between FTC and 3TC; however, the difference disappeared after adjusting for pill burden. Current evidence suggests that FTC and 3TC have equivalent efficacy and toxicity in ARV-naive patients.[3]

Efficacy

3TC has been studied in children with HIV both alone and in combination with other ARV drugs. Extensive data have demonstrated the safety of 3TC and have shown that this drug is associated with clinical improvement and virologic response. It is commonly used in children with HIV as a component of a dual nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) backbone.[4-12] In one study that evaluated the efficacy of NRTI background components, the combination of 3TC plus abacavir (ABC) was superior to zidovudine (ZDV) plus 3TC or ZDV plus ABC in achieving long-term virologic efficacy.[13]

Pharmacokinetics in Infants

Because of its safety profile and availability in a liquid formulation, 3TC has been given to infants during the first 6 weeks of life starting at a dose of 2 mg/kg every 12 hours before age 4 weeks.[9] A population PK analysis of infants who received 3TC affirms that adjusting the dose from 3TC 2 mg/kg to 3TC 4 mg/kg every 12 hours at age 4 weeks provides optimal 3TC exposure for infants with normal maturation of renal function.[14] For infants, the World Health Organization (WHO) weight-band dosing (which is up to five times higher than the FDA-approved dose) results in greater plasma concentrations than the 3TC 2 mg/kg dose.[15] In HIV Prevention Trials Network 040, 3TC was administered as a component of a three-drug regimen to prevent perinatal transmission during the first 2 weeks of life. For 2 weeks, all infants weighing >2,000 g received 3TC 6 mg twice daily, and infants weighing ≤2,000 g received 3TC 4 mg twice daily. These doses resulted in 3TC exposure that was similar to the exposure seen in infants who received the standard twice-daily dosing schedule of 3TC 2 mg/kg per dose for neonates.[16]

In preterm infants, PK modeling supports the use of 3TC for infants. For those with gestational age at birth of ≥24 to <30 weeks, a dose of 2 mg/kg twice daily from birth until weighing 3 kg is supported. For infants with gestational age at birth of ≥30 to <37 weeks, 2 mg/kg twice daily for the first 4 weeks of life followed by 4 mg/kg twice daily is supported. This proposed 3TC dosing has been endorsed by the WHO Pediatric Antiretroviral Working Group but has not yet been clinically validated in preterm infants.[17]

Pharmacokinetics of Liquid Versus Tablet Preparations

The PK of 3TC have been studied after either single or repeat doses in 210 pediatric subjects. Pediatric subjects who received 3TC oral solution according to the recommended dose regimen achieved plasma concentrations of 3TC that were approximately 25percent lower compared with those of adults with HIV who received the oral solution. Pediatric subjects who received 3TC tablets achieved plasma concentrations that were comparable to or slightly higher than those observed in adults who received tablets. In pediatric subjects, the relative bioavailability of 3TC oral solution is approximately 40% lower than the relative bioavailability of tablets that contain 3TC, despite no

difference in the bioavailability of these two formulations among adults. The mechanisms for the diminished relative bioavailability of 3TC oral solution are unknown,[18] but results from a study in adults that compared the PK of 3TC oral solution administered either alone or with increasing concentrations of sorbitol indicate that sorbitol decreases the total exposure of 3TC oral solution.[19] Sorbitol is a component of several ARV solutions, including ABC, as well as common over-the-counter medications that may be used in infants and young children; this may explain the PK discrepancy between the oral solution and tablet formulations. Modeling of PK data in pediatric patients suggests that increasing the oral solution dose to 3TC 5 mg/kg per dose twice daily or 3TC 10 mg/kg per dose once daily (with a maximum of 3TC 300 mg administered daily) in children aged ≥3 months would provide exposures similar to those seen in adult patients who received tablet formulations. However, these models used PK data derived from studies that did not use 3TC liquid formulation, so modeling may not predict exposures for 3TC oral solution, especially when used with liquid ABC. The Panel **does not recommend** using a once-daily dose of 3TC until a child is aged ≥3 years. After 3 years of age, switching to once-daily dosing with the liquid formulation could be considered when harmonizing with other ARV drugs administered once daily, such as ABC and dolutegravir (DTG).

Dosing Considerations—Once-Daily Versus Twice-Daily Administration

The standard adult dose for 3TC is 300 mg once daily, but data are lacking on once-daily administration of 3TC in children. Population PK data indicate that once-daily dosing of 3TC 8 mg/kg leads to area under the curve over 24 hours ($AUC_{0–24h}$) values that are similar to those seen in patients taking 3TC 4 mg/kg twice daily, but minimum blood plasma concentration (C_{min}) values are significantly lower and maximum blood plasma concentration (C_{max}) values are significantly higher in children aged 1 year to 18 years.[20] Intensive PK of once-daily versus twice-daily dosing of 3TC were evaluated in children with HIV aged 2 to 13 years in the PENTA (Paediatric European Network for Treatment of AIDS) 13 trial[4] and in children aged 3 months to 36 months in the PENTA 15 trial.[21] Both the PENTA 13 and PENTA 15 trials used a crossover design with doses of 3TC 8 mg/kg once daily or 3TC 4 mg/kg twice daily. $AUC_{0–24h}$ and clearance values were similar between these two dosing schedules, and most children maintained an undetectable HIV RNA value after the switch. An ARROW (AntiRetroviral Research fOr Watoto) trial PK study of 41 children aged 3 to 12 years (median age 7.6 years) in Uganda who were stable on twice-daily 3TC also showed equivalent $AUC_{0–24h}$ and good clinical outcomes (defined by a low disease stage and a high CD4 T lymphocyte [CD4] cell count) after switching to once-daily 3TC. Median follow-up time during this study was 1.15 years.[22] The larger ARROW trial was a randomized, noninferiority trial that investigated once-daily versus twice-daily doses of 3TC in more than 600 pediatric patients who had initiated therapy with twice-daily 3TC and who had been receiving therapy for ≥36 weeks. Median follow-up time during the study was 114 weeks. Rates of plasma HIV RNA suppression and adverse event profiles for once-daily 3TC were similar to (and statistically non-inferior to) those of twice-daily 3TC.[23]

All four of the studies discussed above enrolled patients who had low plasma HIV RNA or who were clinically stable on twice-daily 3TC before switching to once-daily dosing. Therefore, the Panel supports switching from twice-daily to once-daily dosing of 3TC in children aged ≥3 years who have been clinically stable for 36 weeks with an undetectable viral load and stable CD4 count. Clinicians should use a 10 mg/kg per dose of 3TC oral solution or a weight-based dose of 3TC tablets (neither exceeding 3TC 300 mg) as part of a once-daily regimen.[24] More long-term clinical trials with viral efficacy endpoints are needed to confirm that once-daily dosing of 3TC can be used effectively as part of an initial ARV regimen in children.

3TC undergoes intracellular metabolism to reach its active form, 3TC triphosphate. In adolescents, the mean half-life of intracellular 3TC triphosphate (17.7 hours) is considerably longer than that of unphosphorylated 3TC in plasma (1.5–2 hours). Intracellular concentrations of 3TC triphosphate are equivalent whether 3TC is given once daily or twice daily in adults and adolescents. This supports a recommendation for once-daily 3TC dosing based on FDA recommendations.[25,26]

Weight-Band Dosing

Weight-band dosing recommendations for 3TC have been developed for children weighing ≥3 kg and receiving either the 10-mg/mL oral solution or the 150-mg scored tablets.[27-29]

Recent data from the IMPAACT 2019 clinical trial of dispersible and immediate-release ABC/DTG/3TC tablets (ABC 60 mg, DTG 5 mg, and 3TC 30 mg dispersed in 15–20 mL of water) in children with HIV has confirmed the FDA-approved dosing in infants and children weighing 6 to <25 kg. ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible FDC dosing was confirmed based on PK and safety data in each weight-band at the originally selected dosing, which aligned with WHO weight-band dosing for the individual ARV agents. Follow-up through 24 weeks confirmed the safety, tolerability, and virological efficacy of both formulations.[30] Post hoc population pharmacokinetic modeling of IMPAACT 2019 data further supports weight-band dosing of ABC/3TC/DTG FDC in children weighing ≥6 kg.[31]

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Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF, Vemlidy)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: 25 mg[a]

Fixed-Dose (FDC) Combination Tablets

- [Biktarvy]
  - Bictegravir 50 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
  - Bictegravir 30 mg/emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg
- [Descovy]
  - Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
  - Emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg
- [Genvoya] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg
- [Odefsey] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
- [Symtuza] Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

[Biktarvy] Bictegravir (BIC)/Emtricitabine (FTC)/Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF)

Neonate or Child (Aged <2 Years and Weighing <14 kg) Dose

- No data are currently available on the appropriate dose of Biktarvy in children aged <2 years and weighing <14 kg. Studies are currently being conducted to identify the appropriate dose for this age and weight group.

Child (Aged ≥2 years), Adolescent, and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily, with or without food.

Body Weight	Dose
≥14 kg to <25 kg	BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg
≥25 kg	BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg

Selected Adverse Events

- Asthenia, headache, diarrhea, nausea
- Increased serum lipids

Special Instructions

- Measure serum creatinine before starting a TAF-containing regimen.
- Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before initiating TAF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when TAF is discontinued; therefore, hepatic function should be monitored for several months after patients with HBV infection stop taking TAF.
- The FDA does not recommend using Genvoya with other ARV drugs, but this FDC tablet has been safely used with DRV.[1] Descovy can be safely used[2] with DRV or atazanavir in patients weighing ≥35 kg.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Biktarvy for use in people who have no antiretroviral treatment (ART) history; in people with an ART history who are not virologically suppressed, with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to the integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) class, emtricitabine, or tenofovir; or to replace the current antiretroviral (ARV) regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to bictegravir or tenofovir. Some members of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommend the use of Biktarvy in patients with prior treatment failure who have the virus with the M184V mutation. See the Bictegravir section for additional information.

[Descovy] FTC/TAF

Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily, with or without food.

Body Weight	Dose
≥14 kg to <25 kg	FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg, in combination with an INSTI or a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). In this weight band, Descovy should not be used with protease inhibitors (PIs) that require a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A inhibitor (i.e., ritonavir [RTV] or cobicistat [COBI]).
≥25 kg to <35 kg	FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg, in combination with an INSTI or an NNRTI. In this weight band, Descovy should not be used with PIs that require a CYP3A inhibitor (i.e., RTV or COBI).
≥35 kg	FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg, in combination with an INSTI, NNRTI, or boosted PI.

[Genvoya] Elvitegravir (EVG)/COBI/FTC/TAF

Child (Aged ≥2 Years and Weighing 14 kg to <25 kg) Dose

- Data are currently limited on the appropriate dose of Genvoya in children aged ≥2 years to <6 years and weighing 14 kg to <25 kg. Studies are being conducted to identify the safety and efficacy of a low-dose Genvoya tablet. See the Elvitegravir section for details.
- Do not use Genvoya with EVG, COBI, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, FTC, lamivudine, or PIs that are coformulated with COBI.
- When using Odefsey, patients must be able to take it with a meal of at least 500 calories on a regular schedule (a protein drink alone does not constitute a meal), because it contains RPV.

Metabolism/Elimination

TAF Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- TAF-containing formulations do not require dose adjustment in patients with mild or moderate hepatic impairment, but they should not be used in patients with severe hepatic impairment because they have not been studied in that group.

TAF Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- The TAF metabolite tenofovir is renally excreted.
- No dose adjustment of the TAF 25-mg tablet (Vemlidy)[a] is required in patients with estimated creatinine clearance (CrCl) ≥15 mL/min or in patients with estimated CrCl <15 mL/min (i.e., end-stage renal disease) who are receiving chronic hemodialysis. See the Vemlidy product label[3] for information on the use of the TAF 25-mg tablet in patients with estimated CrCl ≤15 mL/min.
- TAF-containing coformulations are not recommended for use in patients with estimated CrCl <30 mL/min.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose • One tablet once daily with food in ART-naive patients. This dose of Genvoya also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Genvoya. [Odefsey] FTC/Rilpivirine (RPV)/TAF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with a meal in ART-naive patients with HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL. This dose of Odefsey also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Odefsey. [Symtuza] Darunavir (DRV)/COBI/FTC/TAF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with food in ART-naive patients. This dose of Symtuza also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Symtuza.	

[a] TAF 25-mg tablets (Vemlidy) are approved by the FDA for treatment of HBV. In certain circumstances, TAF 25-mg tablets (Vemlidy) might be used as one component of a combination ARV regimen, with dosing recommendations similar to those for Descovy.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) is a substrate of the adenosine triphosphate–dependent transporters P-glycoprotein (P-gp) and the breast cancer resistance protein (BCRP). Drugs that strongly affect P-gp and BCRP activity may lead to changes in TAF absorption. P-gp inducers are expected to decrease TAF exposure, and P-gp inhibitors are expected to increase absorption and plasma concentrations of TAF.[2] A study of 98 healthy participants without HIV measured plasma TAF and tenofovir (TFV) exposures when TAF was administered with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. Coadministration of TAF with rilpivirine (RPV) and dolutegravir (DTG) did not change either TAF or TFV exposure. Coadministration of TAF with the P-gp and BCRP inhibitor cobicistat (COBI), or coadministration with atazanavir/ritonavir (ATV/r) or lopinavir/ritonavir, increased both TAF and TFV exposures. Coadministration of TAF with darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) resulted in unchanged TAF area under the curve (AUC) and doubled TFV AUC. Coadministration of TAF with the P-gp and BCRP inducer efavirenz decreased TAF and TFV exposures.[4]

- Coadministration of TAF with rifamycins (rifabutin, rifampin, or rifapentine) **is not recommended.**[3,5]
- Genvoya contains elvitegravir (EVG) and COBI in addition to TAF (see the Elvitegravir and Cobicistat sections for details). EVG is metabolized predominantly by cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4, secondarily by uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1/3, and by oxidative metabolism pathways. EVG is a modest inducer of CYP2C9. COBI is an inhibitor of CYP3A4 and a weak inhibitor of CYP2D6; in addition, COBI inhibits the adenosine triphosphate–dependent transporters BCRP and P-gp and the organic anion–transporting polypeptides OATP1B1 and OATP1B3. Potential exists for multiple drug interactions when using both EVG and COBI.
- *Absorption:* Administering EVG and bictegravir (BIC) concurrently with antacids or supplements that contain iron, calcium, aluminum and/or magnesium lowers plasma concentrations of these ARV drugs (see the Elvitegravir and Bictegravir sections for details).
- Odefsey contains RPV, which is a CYP3A substrate, and requires dose adjustments when administered with CYP3A-modulating medications.
- Before Genvoya, Odefsey, Descovy, Biktarvy, or Symtuza is administered, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions.
- *Renal elimination:* Drugs that decrease renal function or compete for active tubular secretion (e.g., acyclovir, ganciclovir, high-dose nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) could reduce clearance of the TAF metabolite TFV or emtricitabine (FTC). Concomitant use of nephrotoxic drugs should be avoided when using Genvoya.
- *Protease inhibitors:* Genvoya should not be administered concurrently with products or regimens that contain ritonavir (RTV) because COBI and RTV have similar effects on CYP3A metabolism.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, diarrhea, headache. Greater weight gain has been reported with the use of TAF than with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) in adults and children[6] (see Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain for details).
- *Less common (more severe):* Cases of lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs).

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

TAF is available as a component of several fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablets. These FDC tablets are listed in Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class, and Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

Descovy, an FDC tablet that contains FTC and TAF (FTC/TAF), is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children who weigh ≥14 kg to <25 kg at a dose of FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg and for children who weigh ≥25 kg to <35 kg at a dose of FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg when used as part of an ARV regimen that does not include a boosted protease inhibitor (PI). Descovy is approved by the FDA for use in children who weigh ≥35 kg at a dose of FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg when used in combination with any ARV drugs, including RTV-boosted or COBI-boosted PIs. Odefsey, an FDC tablet that contains FTC 200 mg, RPV 25 mg, and TAF 25 mg (FTC/RPV/TAF), is approved by the FDA[7] for use in children who weigh ≥25 kg. Genvoya, an FDC tablet that contains EVG 150 mg, COBI 150 mg, FTC 200 mg, and TAF 10 mg (elvitegravir/cobicistat [EVG/c]/FTC/TAF), is approved by the FDA for use in children who weigh ≥25 kg when used without other ARV drugs[8] (see Table A below). BIC is available only as part of the FDC tablet Biktarvy, which contains BIC, FTC, and TAF (BIC/FTC/TAF). Biktarvy is approved by the FDA[8,9] for use in children or adolescents with body weight ≥14 kg to <25 kg at a dose of BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg and for children, adolescents, and adults with body weight ≥25 kg at a dose of BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg.[8,10-13] Symtuza, an FDC tablet that contains DRV 800 mg, COBI 150 mg, FTC 200 mg, and TAF 10 mg (darunavir/cobicistat [DRV/c]/FTC/TAF) is approved by the FDA[8] for use in children and adolescents who weigh ≥40 kg.

TAF has antiviral activity and efficacy against hepatitis B virus (HBV). Testing for HBV should be performed prior to starting treatment with TAF. If HBV is found, rebound of clinical hepatitis could occur when TAF is stopped. For more information about hepatitis rebound in patients with HBV/HIV coinfection, see the Hepatitis B Virus Infection section of the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines. TAF alone (as Vemlidy) is approved by the FDA for use in people aged ≥8 years, but it is approved only for treating HBV, not HIV.

Formulations

TAF-containing pills are smaller than their TDF-containing counterparts, a significant advantage for some pediatric patients who may have trouble swallowing larger pills (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents). FTC/TAF available formulations contain either TAF 15 mg (for children weighing 14 to <25 kg) or TAF 25 mg (for weight ≥25 kg), but neither formulation should be used in children weighing <35 kg in combination with PIs that require boosting with RTV or COBI. Both EVG/c/FTC/TAF and DRV/c/FTC/TAF contain TAF 10 mg, whereas FTC/RPV/TAF contains TAF 25 mg. BIC/FTC/TAF is available in two strengths: one containing TAF 15 mg for children aged ≥2 years and weighing <25 kg and the other containing TAF 25 mg for people weighing ≥25 kg. COBI boosts TAF blood concentrations and tenofovir diphosphate (TFV-DP) intracellular exposure after TAF administration. Therefore, in people weighing ≥25 kg, administration of EVG/c/FTC/TAF, which contains TAF 10 mg and COBI,

achieves TFV-DP systemic exposure that is similar to the exposure achieved by FTC/RPV/TAF or BIC/FTC/TAF containing TAF 25 mg but no COBI.

Table A. U.S. Food and Drug Administration–Approved Tenofovir Alafenamide-Containing Formulations

Drug	Contains	Dose of TAF	Minimum Age	Minimum Body Weight or Weight Range	Comment
Vemlidy	TAF	25 mg	6 years	≥25 kg	Approved for HBV treatment only.
Descovy	FTC/TAF	15 mg	N/A	≥14 kg to <25 kg	Use with an INSTI or NNRTI, but not with a boosted PI.
	FTC/TAF	25 mg	N/A	≥25 kg	
	FTC/TAF	25 mg	N/A	35 kg	Use with any ARV drugs, including a boosted PI.
Odefsey	FTC/RPV/TAF	25 mg	N/A	25 kg	Generally not to be used with other ARV drugs.[a]
Genvoya	EVG/c/FTC/TAF	10 mg	N/A	25 kg	TAF dose is lower due to the COBI boosting. Generally not to be used with other ARV drugs.[a]
Symtuza	DRV/c/FTC/TAF	10 mg	N/A	40 kg	TAF dose is lower due to the COBI boosting. Generally not to be used with other ARV drugs.[a]
Biktarvy	BIC/FTC/TAF	15 mg	N/A	≥14 kg to <25 kg	Generally not to be used with other ARV drugs.[a]
	BIC/FTC/TAF	25 mg	N/A	≥25 kg	

[a] Consult a specialist in HIV care before using these fixed-dose combination tablets with other ARV agents.

Key: ARV = antiretroviral; BIC = bictegravir; COBI = cobicistat; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; EVG/c = elvitegravir/cobicistat; FTC = emtricitabine; HBV = hepatitis B virus; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; RPV = rilpivirine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide

Tenofovir Alafenamide Versus Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate

Both TDF and TAF are prodrugs of the NRTI TFV. After oral administration, TDF is well absorbed[11,12] and is so rapidly metabolized to TFV that TDF itself cannot be measured in blood (even when plasma is sampled within 5 minutes of administration).[13] TFV is the main compound that is measurable in plasma after TDF administration. From the bloodstream, TFV enters cells and is phosphorylated to the active agent TFV-DP.

TAF also has good oral bioavailability.[14,15] Within the enterocyte and liver, TAF is not metabolized to TFV as quickly as TDF, so the plasma TFV concentration is much lower with administration of TAF than with TDF, and the main component in plasma is the prodrug itself, TAF.[16] Once inside the cell, TAF is hydrolyzed to TFV,[17,18] and then TFV-DP is produced by the same mechanism as for TDF. Relative to TDF, TAF more effectively delivers TFV to cells throughout the body.[14] Therefore, a much lower dose of TAF results in intracellular concentrations of TFV-DP that are higher than the

concentrations seen after TDF administration (see Table B below). In a combined analysis of two randomized crossover directly observed therapy studies of FTC/TAF (200 mg/25 mg) versus FTC/TDF (200 mg/300 mg) in adults without HIV, FTC/TAF produced 6.7- to 7.3-fold higher TFV-DP in peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) compared to FTC/TDF across adherence levels (33%, 67%, or 100%). Additionally, the half-life of TFV-DP in PBMCs appeared numerically but not significantly longer for TAF (2.9 days; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.5–5.5) than for TDF (2.1 days; 95% CI, 1.5–2.9). These data support a conclusion of increased potency and pharmacological forgiveness with FTC/TAF over FTC/TDF in the PBMC compartment.[19]

The key pharmacokinetic (PK) difference between TDF and TAF is that TDF results in higher plasma TFV concentrations than TAF, but when administered at FDA-approved doses, both drugs produce high, therapeutically effective intracellular TFV-DP concentrations.[16,20] Because it is intracellular TFV-DP that suppresses viral replication, TAF should have antiviral efficacy that is equivalent to the antiviral efficacy of TDF. However, the toxicities that are specifically related to high plasma TFV concentrations should not occur when using TAF. High plasma TFV concentration has been linked to TDF-related endocrine disruption that is associated with low bone mineral density (BMD).[21] High plasma TFV concentration also has been closely associated with both glomerular[21-23] and proximal tubular[24] renal toxicity.

Table B. Multiple-Dose Pharmacokinetics at Day 10 of Once-Daily Oral Administration in Adults With HIV: Tenofovir Alafenamide vs. Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate

Parameter	TAF 25 mg (n = 8)	TDF 300 mg (n = 6)
Plasma TFV AUC_{tau} (ng·h/mL)	267.7 (26.7)	1,918.0 (39.4)
Plasma TFV C_{max} (ng/mL)	15.7 (22.1)	252.1 (36.6)
Plasma TFV C_{tau} (ng/mL)	9.2 (26.1)	38.7 (44.7)
PBMC TFV-DP AUC_{tau} (μM·h)	21.4 (76.9)	3.0 (119.6)

Note: The mean age of participants was 38 years, with a range of 20 to 57 years. Data presented are mean (% coefficient of variation).

Source: Ruane PJ, DeJesus E, Berger D, et al. Antiviral activity, safety, and pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics of tenofovir alafenamide as 10-day monotherapy in HIV-1-positive adults. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr*. 2013;63(4):449-455. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23807155.

Key: AUC_{tau} = area under the curve for the dosing interval (i.e., 24 hours); C_{max} = peak concentration; C_{tau} = concentration at the end of a dosing interval (i.e., at 24 hours, the trough concentration); PBMC = peripheral blood mononuclear cell; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TFV = tenofovir; TFV-DP = tenofovir diphosphate

Tenofovir Alafenamide Efficacy in Clinical Trials in Adults

In adults, TAF is non-inferior to TDF in its ability to control viral load over 48 to 96 weeks when used in combination with EVG, COBI, and FTC[25-28]; with FTC and RPV[29]; with DRV, COBI, and FTC[30-32]; and when TAF and FTC are administered in combination with other ARV drugs.[33] In a switch study of adults who were virologically suppressed on a three-drug regimen that included abacavir (ABC), FTC/TAF was non-inferior to a regimen of lamivudine plus ABC plus a third ARV drug over 48 weeks. No differences occurred in BMD or the frequency of renal glomerular toxicities or renal tubular toxicities between these groups, but the TAF group showed a decline in high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol levels, whereas the ABC group had an increase in HDL cholesterol

levels[34] (−2 mg/dL vs. +2 mg/dL, respectively; $P = 0.0003$). Viral load suppression was attained in about 90% of study participants when TAF was given as part of the coformulated BIC/FTC/TAF.[35-37]

Tenofovir Alafenamide Efficacy and Effectiveness in Adolescents and Children

The combination of EVG, COBI, FTC, and TAF has been shown to have similar efficacy when used in adults and two groups of children: those weighing ≥35 kg and aged ≥12 years[38] and those weighing ≥25 kg and aged ≥6 years[39] (see the Elvitegravir section for details). In a switch study, treatment with BIC/FTC/TAF resulted in viral load suppression at 48 weeks in 49 of 50 (98%) children aged 6 years to <12 years and in 50 of 50 (100%) children aged 12 years to <18 years[9] (see the Bictegravir section for details). Initial evidence in a systematic review suggests good viral suppression and no obvious safety concerns in children and adolescents on TAF-containing regimens for more than 24 to 48 weeks.[40] However, in a retrospective single-center study in France including 74 pediatric patients who received BIC/FTC/TAF for ≥6 months between 2019 and 2023, virologic failure occurred in 28 children (38%), more frequently in those with viral failure than viral suppression at baseline (68% vs. 26%); notably, only one patient developed a treatment-emergent mutation (T69D/N), which is selected by NRTIs.[41]

Pharmacokinetics

Drug Exposure and Virologic Response

Virologic suppression in people who are taking TAF or TDF is most closely related to intracellular TFV-DP concentrations. In adults, TAF generates peripheral blood mononuclear cell TFV-DP concentrations that are twofold[20] to sevenfold higher than those generated with TDF at clinically meaningful doses.[16,19,25] Higher TFV-DP concentrations result in a stronger antiviral potency[16] and a higher barrier to resistance.[42,43] Therefore, because TAF administration leads to higher intracellular TFV-DP concentrations than TDF, TAF may be more effective against NRTI-resistant virus than TDF. The mean TFV-DP concentration is higher in youth aged 12 to 18 years than in adults: 221.8 fmol/million cells (with a coefficient of variation [CV] of 94.4%) versus 120.8 fmol/million cells (CV 91.4%), respectively.[38]

Drug Exposure and Safety: All Age Groups

FTC/TAF can be safely combined with DTG or raltegravir without concern for drug interactions (see Table C below). FTC and TAF also have been safely combined with BIC in the FDC tablet Biktarvy.

Table C. Changes in Tenofovir Alafenamide Pharmacokinetic Parameters in the Presence of Co-administered Antiretroviral Drugs in Adult Healthy Volunteers

Co-administered ARV	Dosage (Once Daily) (mg)	TAF Dosage (Once Daily) (mg)	N	Mean Ratio of TAF C_{max} (90% CI)[a]	Mean Ratio of TAF AUC (90% CI)[a]
Atazanavir	300 (+100 ritonavir)	10	10	1.77 (1.28, 2.44)	1.91 (1.55, 2.35)
Cobicistat	150	8	12	2.83 (2.20, 3.65)	2.65 (2.29, 3.07)
Darunavir	800 (+150 cobicistat)	25[b]	11	0.93 (0.72, 1.21)	0.98 (0.80, 1.19)
	800 (+100 ritonavir)	10	10	1.42 (0.96, 2.09)	1.06 (0.84, 1.35)
Dolutegravir	50	10	10	1.24 (0.88, 1.74)	1.19 (0.96, 1.48)
Efavirenz	600	40[b]	11	0.78 (0.58, 1.05)	0.86 (0.72, 1.02)
Lopinavir	800 (+200 ritonavir)	10	10	2.19 (1.72, 2.79)	1.47 (1.17, 1.85)
Rilpivirine	25	25	17	1.01 (0.84, 1.22)	1.01 (0.94, 1.09)

[a] Ratio represents concentrations of TAF plus the concomitant drug(s) divided by concentrations of TAF alone.

[b] Study was conducted with Descovy (FTC/TAF).

Source: Table was modified from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Descovy product label.

Key: ARV = antiretroviral drug; AUC = area under the curve; CI = confidence interval; C_{max} = maximum concentration; FTC = emtricitabine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide

When FTC/TAF, which contains TAF 25 mg, is combined with boosted atazanavir (ATV), DRV, or lopinavir (LPV), the P-gp inhibitors COBI or RTV increase the TAF exposure to higher concentrations than those seen with the use of EVG/c/FTC/TAF, which contains TAF 10 mg. However, the plasma TFV concentrations seen with the use of EVG/c/FTC/TAF or TAF plus DRV/r or DRV/c are still much lower than those seen with the use of Stribild, an FDC tablet that contains EVG, COBI, FTC, and TDF (see Table D below).

Table D. Plasma Tenofovir Alafenamide and Plasma Tenofovir Exposures When Tenofovir Alafenamide and Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate Are Used With Boosted Antiretroviral Drugs

Regimen	TAF AUC (ng·h/mL)	TAF AUC Ratio TAF AUC of TAF-Containing Regimen/TAF AUC of Genvoya (Adult Exposure)	TFV AUC (ng·h/mL)	TFV AUC Ratio TFV AUC of TAF-Containing Regimen/TFV AUC of Stribild (Adult Exposure)
Adult				
Stribild (EVG/c/FTC/TDF 300 mg)	N/A	N/A	4,400	1.00
Genvoya (EVG/c/FTC/TAF **10 mg**)	210	1.0	290	0.07
DRV/r plus TAF 25 mg[a]	196	0.93	259	0.06
DRV/c plus TAF 25 mg	239	1.1	935	0.21
Pediatric				
Stribild (EVG/c/FTC/TDF 300 mg) for Ages **12–18** years	N/A	N/A	6,028	1.37
Genvoya (EVG/c/**FTC/TAF 10 mg**) for Ages **12–18 years**	200	0.95	290	0.07
Genvoya (EVG/c/**FTC/TAF 10 mg**) for Ages 6–**12 years**	330	1.6	440	0.10

[a] Values for this row do not come from observed data. These values were predicted based on data from studies that used TAF 10 mg. The AUC values predicted for TAF 25 mg were obtained by multiplying the TAF 10 mg AUC by 2.5 for both TAF and TFV AUC.

Source: Table modified from U.S. Food and Drug Administration Summary Review of TAF and from the TAF clinical pharmacology review using data from the Stribild product label and Genvoya product label.

Key: AUC = area under the curve; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; EVG/c = elvitegravir/cobicistat; FTC = emtricitabine; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; TFV = tenofovir

In the CHAPAS-4 trial of African children taking TAF/FTC with DTG or a boosted PI, TAF exposures were acceptable when given with DTG, DRV/r, and lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r). TAF exposures were higher when TAF was given with ATV/r, but TFV exposures were comparable to administration with other boosted PIs (see Table E below).[44]

Table E. Plasma Tenofovir Alafenamide and Plasma Tenofovir Exposures When Tenofovir Alafenamide and Emtricitabine Are Administered With Dolutegravir or Boosted Protease Inhibitors

Pharmacokinetic Parameter	TAF/FTC + DTG	TAF/FTC + ATV/r	TAF/FTC + DRV/r	TAF/FTC + LPV/r	Adult Reference Using TAF 25 mg Unboosted or TAF **10** mg Boosted	Adult Reference Using TAF 25 mg With DRV/c
TAF						
AUC_{last} (ng·h/mL)	285 (79)	538 (54)	232 (61)	212 (98)	206 (72)	222
C_{max} (ng/mL)	145 (91)	309 (78)	155 (104)	155 (107)	162 (51)	181
TFV						
AUC_{tau} (ng·h/mL)	324 (29)	847 (37)	744 (26)	864 (46)	293 (27)	937
C_{max} (ng/mL)	19.6 (26)	53.2 (42)	44.5 (26)	50.3 (43)	15.2 (26)	56
C_{trough} (ng/mL)	11.0 (35)	28.1 (39)	26.1 (28)	31.2 (48)	11 (28.5)	33.2

Note: Data presented are geometric mean (% coefficient of variation).

Source: Waalewijn H, Szubert AJ, Wasmann RE, et al. First pharmacokinetic data of tenofovir alafenamide fumarate and tenofovir with dolutegravir or boosted protease inhibitors in African children: a substudy of the CHAPAS-4 trial. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2023;77(6):875-882.

Key: ATV/r = atazanavir/ritonavir; AUClast = area under the concentration-time curve from dosing to the time of the last measured concentration; AUC_{tau} = area under the concentration-time curve over the dosing interval; C_{max} = maximum plasma concentration; C_{trough} = trough concentration; DRV/c = darunavir/cobicistat; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; DTG = dolutegravir; FTC = emtricitabine; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TFV = tenofovir

TAF is available in FDA-approved adult FDC tablets at dosages of either 10 mg or 25 mg. The initial clinical trials in adults showing the safety of FTC/TAF with ATV/r or DRV/r used FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg.[45] However, in Trial GS-US-299-0102 (NCT01565850), a Phase 2b trial in adults that compared a regimen of DRV/c plus FTC/TAF 10 mg to a regimen of DRV/c plus FTC/TDF, virologic outcomes at Week 48 were worse for participants in the TAF 10-mg arm than in the TDF arm.[46] Hence, FTC/TAF 25 mg was initially recommended for approval instead of FTC/TAF 10 mg.[46] The FDA label states that when FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg is combined with boosted ATV, DRV, or LPV in adults, "no clinically significant drug interactions have been either observed or are expected."[2] The combination of FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg was approved by the FDA for use in adults, independent of the accompanying ARV drugs (which may include a boosted PI or an integrase strand transfer inhibitor [INSTI]),[2] but some FDC tablets for adults (i.e., EVG/c/FTC/TAF and DRV/c/FTC/TAF) have subsequently been FDA approved with a 10-mg TAF component.[47,48]

Drug Exposure and Safety: Aged 12 to 18 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg

A study of FTC/TAF in 18 children and adolescents (aged 12–18 years and weighing ≥35 kg) was performed using FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg plus a boosted third ARV drug or FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg with an unboosted third ARV drug. The results of this study showed TAF exposures in children and adolescents that were like those seen in adults. TAF was well tolerated and efficacious during the 24 weeks of study. Asymptomatic Grade 3 or 4 elevations in amylase levels were noted in

5 of 28 participants (18%), and Grade 3 or 4 elevations in fasting low-density-lipoprotein (LDL) levels were noted in 2 of 28 participants (7%).[49]

Studies of EVG/c/FTC/TAF in children aged 12 years to 18 years and weighing ≥35 kg showed that TAF and TFV exposures were like those found in adults (see Table D above), and that the drug combination was well tolerated and efficacious over 48 weeks of study.[38] Because these TAF and TFV exposures were similar to those seen in adults, FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg was also approved by the FDA for use in this age and weight group, independent of the accompanying ARV drugs in the regimen (which may include a boosted PI or an INSTI).[2]

The formulation of Biktarvy, which contains BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg, was administered to 50 children aged 6 years to <12 years and weighing ≥25 kg and 50 children and adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years and weighing ≥35 kg who had had viral loads <50 copies/mL for at least 6 months. The drug was well tolerated. All 50 participants in the study[9] had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 24, and 49 participants had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 48 (see the Bictegravir section for details).

Drug Exposure and Safety: Aged 6 Years to <12 Years and Weighing 25 kg to <35 kg

Studies of EVG/c/FTC/TAF in children aged 6 years to <12 years who weighed ≥25 kg showed that TAF and TFV exposures were somewhat higher than those found in adults (see Table D above), but the drug combination was well tolerated and efficacious over 24 weeks of study.[39,50] This led to FDA approval of EVG/c/FTC/TAF for use in children aged ≥6 years and weighing ≥25 kg.[47] Follow-up to 96 weeks in a small number of participants showed no change from baseline in the median spine BMD z-score, but there was a decline in the median total body BMD z-score and a possible decline in the median estimated glomerular filtration rate.[51]

Because INSTIs do not increase TAF concentrations, regimens that include FTC/TAF 25 mg plus an INSTI are expected to result in safe drug exposures that are like those seen with coformulated EVG/c/FTC/TAF 10 mg. This led the FDA to approve FTC/TAF 25 mg for use in children aged ≥6 years and weighing ≥25 kg when used in combination with other ARV drugs that do not include a boosted PI.[2]

Because boosted ATV, DRV, or LPV increase TAF exposure to concentrations that are higher than those seen with use of EVG/c/FTC/TAF, and because safety and PK studies are ongoing on the use of these combinations in children weighing <35 kg, the safety of FTC/TAF combined with COBI-boosted or RTV-boosted PIs in children weighing between 25 kg and <35 kg cannot be assured.[52] Therefore, FDA approval for FTC/TAF used in combination with boosted PIs is limited to children weighing ≥35 kg (see Table A above).[2]

Drug Exposure and Safety: Aged ≥2 Years and Weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg

Biktarvy tablets consisting of BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg were administered to children aged ≥2 years weighing 14 kg to <25 kg and who had viral loads <50 copies/mL on stable antiretroviral therapy (ART). TAF exposures (ratios relative to reference, area under the concentration-time curve over the dosing interval [AUC_{tau}] 145%, area under the concentration-time curve from dosing to the time of the last measured concentration [AUC_{last}] 145%, and maximum plasma concentration [C_{max}] 173%) were generally higher than reference values derived population

PK modeling based on adult Phase 3 studies, but TFV AUC and concentrations at the end of the dosing interval (ratios relative to reference, AUC_{tau} 112%, C_{max} 143%, and concentration at the end of a dosing interval [C_{tau}] 96%) were more similar to reference values. No participants experienced any severe (Grade 3 or higher) or serious adverse events, and all drug-related adverse events were mild (Grade 1) or moderate (Grade 2). The median change in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count was −123 cells/mm^3 at 48 weeks and −137 cells/mm^3 at 96 weeks, and the median change in CD4 percentage was +1.1% at 48 weeks and −0.8% at 96 weeks. HIV RNA at <50 copies/mL was maintained in 20 of 22 (91%) participants at 24 weeks and 21 of 22 (95%) participants at 48 weeks; when excluding missing values from the FDA snapshot algorithm, 100% of participants had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL at Weeks 24, 48, and 96 [53,54] (see the Bictegravir section for details). Safety and PK studies in children using TAF and FTC with atazanavir/cobicistat or DRV/c are ongoing.[52]

Dosing: Crushing, Splitting, and Swallowability of Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Alafenamide Tablets

Viral load suppression was reported in one adult patient with HIV who received crushed FTC/TAF tablets plus crushed DTG tablets. The crushed tablets were mixed with water and administered via a gastrostomy tube. Each dose was followed by a can of a nutritional supplement. No PK parameters were measured.[55] In adults without HIV, the PKs of crushed DRV/c/FTC/TAF tablets showed decreased TAF bioavailability compared to whole tablets. The clinical implications of these findings are unclear.[56] Case reports in adults with HIV who are receiving crushed BIC/FTC/TAF, a film-coated FDC tablet, lacked PK measurements and described inconsistent virological outcomes.[57] Based on an adult bioequivalence study, crushed BIC/FTC/TAF may lead to suboptimal FTC and TAF exposures.[58] Thus, crushed BIC/FTC/TAF **is not recommended** (see the Bictegravir section for details).

For children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, BIC/FTC/TAF may be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are swallowed within 10 minutes. Among 18 children aged ≥2 years and weighing 14 to <25 kg, 79% to 89% reported that BIC/FTC/TAF tablets were easy or super easy to swallow. Of six children under 6 years old who split the tablet in half on at least one occasion, three were swallowing the tablet whole at Week 48.[54] Among 24 children with HIV-1 aged ≥6 years to <12 years and weighing ≥25 kg to <40 kg swallowing FDC tablets of DRV/c/FTC/TAF or who split matching placebo tablets, 96% were able to swallow the whole or split tablet after one or two attempts, and >70% rated acceptability for long-term daily use as acceptable or good. Breaking the scored matching placebo was considered easy or OK by 79% of caregivers, although whole tablets were favored over split tablets among children.[59]

Toxicity

Bone

TAF causes bone toxicity less frequently than TDF.[25-27,30-33,60,61] For example, in one study of 1,733 randomized adult participants with HIV, those treated with EVG/c/FTC/TAF had a smaller decrease in BMD at the spine (mean change −1.30% vs. −2.86%; $P < 0.0001$) and hip (−0.66% vs. −2.95%; $P < 0.0001$) at 48 weeks than those given EVG/c/FTC/TDF.[25] These differences were maintained until 96 weeks.[28] The clinical importance of these changes in BMD is unclear. Preliminary data from two open-label multicohort studies of 169 ART-naive or ART-experienced children and adolescents living with HIV aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg who received

TAF/FTC-containing ART were reassuring with respect to longitudinal (up to 144 to 288 weeks) BMD measurements.[62] Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry of the spine and total body less head (TBLH) BMD measurements increased from baseline over time, and height-adjusted z-scores also increased from baseline, except for a decrease in height-adjusted TBLH z-scores in the youngest and lightest female group. One participant had a >4% decrease in spine BMD, but none had a >4% decrease in TBLH density. The increases in spine and TBLH BMD were consistent with those observed in children and adolescents without HIV.

Renal

Studies in adolescents aged 12 to 17 years[38] and adults[25-27,30,31,33] show that TAF is less frequently associated with glomerular and renal tubular damage than TDF.[63] For example, in one study of 1,733 randomized adult participants with HIV, those treated with EVG/c/FTC/TAF had a smaller mean increase in serum creatinine (0.08 mg/dL vs. 0.12 mg/dL; $P < 0.0001$) than those given EVC/c/FTC/TDF, and a smaller percent change from baseline in urine protein to creatinine ratio (median % change −3% vs. +20%; $P < 0.0001$) at 48 weeks.[25] These differences persisted until 96 weeks of follow-up.[28] Safety of EVG/c/FTC/TAF has been demonstrated in adults with estimated creatinine clearances between 30 mL/min and 69 mL/min.[64] Postmarketing cases of renal impairment—including acute renal failure, proximal renal tubulopathy, and Fanconi syndrome—have been reported with TAF-containing products.[2,3] TAF may require less intense renal safety monitoring than TDF, but more experience with the drug in broad clinical practice will be needed before a specific recommendation can be made.

Lipids

In treatment-naive adults who were evaluated after 48 weeks of therapy, initiation of EVG/c/FTC/TAF was associated with increases in serum lipids that were greater than those observed with the initiation of EVG/c/FTC/TDF, with a mean increase in total cholesterol levels of 31 mg/dL versus 23 mg/dL, and a mean increase in LDL cholesterol levels of 16 mg/dL versus 4 mg/dL, respectively. In 48 adolescents who were treated with EVG/c/FTC/TAF, the following median changes from baseline occurred at Weeks 24 and 36: Fasting total cholesterol levels increased 26 mg/dL and 36 mg/dL, respectively; fasting direct LDL levels increased 10 mg/dL and 17 mg/dL, respectively; and fasting triglycerides increased 14 mg/dL and 19 mg/dL, respectively.[65] Similar TAF-related increases in total cholesterol levels and LDL cholesterol levels have been found when TAF is administered with other combinations of ARV drugs.[31] Monitoring serum lipids while the patient is taking TAF-containing FDC tablets is warranted, given these data (see Table 17b. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Dyslipidemia for details).

Weight Gain

Observational data are limited, and no randomized controlled trials have examined TAF-associated weight gain in children. In adults, greater weight gain has been reported with the use of TAF than with the use of TDF[66-73] (see Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain for details). Although weight gain at ART initiation might represent a “return to health,”[63] patients initiating treatment with TAF had larger increases in weight than those initiating treatment with TDF[67,68]; increases in weight and body mass index (BMI) have been observed in ARV switch studies, as well.[69,72,74] In adults, the effect may be greatest in Black females,[68,72] especially if administered in combination with

INSTIs.[68,70] A study in adult women showed increased BMI with the switch to either an INSTI or TAF, but these BMI increases were only seen in people with BMI <30 kg/m^2 at baseline.[66]

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Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF, Viread)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Oral Powder: 40 mg per 1 g of oral powder (one level scoop, measured with supplied dosing scoop, equals 1 g oral powder)

Tablets: 150 mg, 200 mg, 250 mg, and 300 mg

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Atripla[a] and generic] Efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Cimduo] Lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Complera] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Delstrigo] Doravirine 100 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Stribild] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Symfi] Efavirenz 600 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Symfi Lo[a] and generic] Efavirenz 400 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Temixys] Lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Truvada tablet]
  - Emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
  - Emtricitabine 167 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 250 mg
  - Emtricitabine 133 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 200 mg
  - Emtricitabine 100 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 150 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate and Infant Dose

- Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or recommended for use in neonates or infants aged <2 years.

Child **(Aged ≥2** Years **to <12 Years)** and Weighing **≥10** kg Dose[a]

- TDF 8 mg/kg per dose once daily

Selected Adverse Events

- Asthenia, headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, flatulence
- Glomerular and proximal renal tubular dysfunction
- Decreased bone mineral density[b]

Special Instructions

- TDF oral powder formulation is available for children who are unable to swallow tablets.
- TDF oral powder should be measured only with the supplied dosing scoop: one level scoop = 1 g powder = TDF 40 mg.

TDF Oral Powder Dosing Table

Body Weight	TDF Oral Powder Once-Daily Scoops of Powder
10 kg to <12 kg	2 scoops (80 mg)
12 kg to <14 kg	2.5 scoops (100 mg)
14 kg to <17 kg	3 scoops (120 mg)
17 kg to <19 kg	3.5 scoops (140 mg)
19 kg to <22 kg	4 scoops (160 mg)
22 kg to <24 kg	4.5 scoops (180 mg)
24 kg to <27 kg	5 scoops (200 mg)
27 kg to <29 kg	5.5 scoops (220 mg)
29 kg to <32 kg	6 scoops (240 mg)
32 kg to <34 kg	6.5 scoops (260 mg)
34 kg to <35 kg	7 scoops (280 mg)
≥35 kg	7.5 scoops (300 mg)

TDF Tablet Dosing Table

Body Weight	TDF Tablet Once Daily
17 kg to <22 kg	150 mg
22 kg to <28 kg	200 mg
28 kg to <35 kg	250 mg
≥35 kg	300 mg

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg)[a] and Adult Dose

- TDF 300 mg once daily

[Atripla[a] and Generic] Efavirenz (EFV)/ Emtricitabine (FTC)/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Take on an empty stomach.

[Cimduo] Lamivudine (3TC)/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Mix TDF oral powder with 2–4 oz of soft food that does not require chewing (e.g., applesauce, yogurt). Administer immediately after mixing to avoid the bitter taste.
- Do not try to mix the TDF oral powder with liquid. The powder may float on the top even after vigorous stirring.
- Although TDF can be administered without food, food requirements vary depending on the other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs contained in an FDC tablet. Food requirements are listed with dosing recommendations in Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.
- Measure serum creatinine and perform a urine dipstick test for protein and glucose before starting a TDF-containing regimen. Serum creatinine should be monitored, and urine should be tested for protein and glucose at intervals during continued therapy (see Table 17i. Nephrotoxic Effects). Measure serum phosphate if there is clinical suspicion of hypophosphatemia.
- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using TDF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when TDF is discontinued; therefore, hepatic function should be monitored for several months after children with HBV infection stop taking TDF.
- Tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) is associated with less bone and renal toxicity than TDF, but it has equal antiviral efficacy. **Do not use TAF and TDF together.** Consider switching from TDF to TAF in appropriate clinical settings.

Metabolism/Elimination

TDF Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- No change in TDF dosing is required for children with hepatic impairment.
- Stribild **should not be used** in children with severe hepatic impairment.
- Atripla[a], Symfi, and Symfi Lo[a] should be used with caution in children with hepatic impairment; Symfi and Symfi Lo[a] **are not recommended** for use in moderate or severe hepatic impairment.

TDF Dosing in Children With Renal Insufficiency

- The tenofovir metabolite of TDF is renally excreted.
- The dose of TDF should be decreased in children with impaired renal function (creatinine clearance [CrCl] <50 mL/min). Consult the manufacturer's prescribing information for directions on how to adjust the dose in accordance with CrCl.

[Complera] FTC/Rilpivirine/TDF *Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily in antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive adults with baseline HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL. This dose of Complera also can be used in virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) adults who are currently on their first or second regimen and have no history of virologic failure or resistance to rilpivirine and other ARV drugs. • Administer with a meal of ≥500 calories. [Delstrigo] Doravirine/3TC/TDF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily in people who are ART-naive and people who are ARV-experienced who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and with no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Delstrigo. [Stribild] Elvitegravir/Cobicistat/FTC/TDF *Adolescent (Weighing >35 kg With a Sexual Maturity Rating [SMR] of 4 or 5) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily in ART-naive adults. This dose of Stribild also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in adolescents and adults who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and with no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Stribild. • Administer with food. [Symfi] EFV **600 mg**/3TC/TDF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily • Take on an empty stomach. [Symfi Lo[a] and Generic] EFV **400 mg**/3TC/TDF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily • Take on an empty stomach.	• The FDCs Atripla[a], Cimduo, Complera, Delstrigo, Symfi, Symfi Lo[a], or Temixys should not be used in children with CrCl <50 mL/min or in children who require dialysis. • The FDC Truvada should not be used in children with CrCl <30 mL/min or in children who require dialysis. • The FDC Stribild should not be initiated in children with estimated CrCl <70 mL/min and should be discontinued in children with estimated CrCl <50 mL/min. • FTC and TDF require dosage adjustments in children with these levels of renal impairment, and such adjustments cannot be achieved with an FDC tablet.

- Symfi Lo[a] has not been studied in children (SMR 1–3), and major inter-individual variability in efavirenz (EFV) plasma concentrations has been found in children in a multi-ethnic setting. The 400-mg dose of EFV may be too low in children or adolescents with SMRs of 1–3 who weigh ≥40 kg. Some members of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV suggest therapeutic drug monitoring when used in children weighing ≥40 kg. See the Efavirenz section for more information.

[Temixys] 3TC/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily

[Truvada] FTC/TDF

Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

Truvada Dosing Table

Body Weight	FTC/TDF Tablet Once Daily
17 kg to <22 kg	One FTC 100 mg/ TDF 150 mg tablet
22 kg to <28 kg	One FTC 133 mg/ TDF 200 mg tablet
28 kg to <35 kg	One FTC 167 mg/ TDF 250 mg tablet
≥35 kg and adults	One FTC 200 mg/ TDF 300 mg tablet

[a] Brand name product has been discontinued; generic version is still available.

[b] See the text for a discussion of the concerns about decreased bone mineral density in children who are receiving TDF, especially in prepubertal children and those in early puberty (SMR 1 or 2).

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) is a substrate of the adenosine triphosphate–dependent transporters P-glycoprotein and breast cancer resistance protein. When TDF is coadministered with inhibitors of these transporters, an increase in TDF absorption may be observed, with the potential for enhanced TDF toxicity.[1]
- *Renal elimination:* Drugs that decrease renal function or compete for active tubular secretion could reduce clearance of plasma tenofovir (TFV). Avoid frequent or long-term use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs in children who are taking TDF.

- *Other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs):* Didanosine (ddI) serum concentrations increase when this drug is coadministered with TDF, and this combination **should not be used** because of the increased risk of ddI toxicity.
- *Protease inhibitors (PIs):* Atazanavir (ATV) without ritonavir **should not be coadministered** with TDF, because TDF decreases ATV plasma concentrations. The combination of atazanavir/ritonavir, darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r), and lopinavir/ritonavir increases plasma TFV concentrations and increases the risk of TDF-associated toxicity.[1,2]
- *Absorption:* Administering elvitegravir (EVG) concurrently with antacids and supplements that contain iron, calcium, aluminum, and/or magnesium lowers plasma concentrations of EVG. Similarly, dolutegravir (DTG) should be taken 2 hours before or 6 hours after taking cation-containing antacids or laxatives, sucralfate, oral iron supplements, oral calcium supplements, or buffered medications.[3] If using Stribild, see the Elvitegravir section of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for additional information.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, flatulence
- *Less common (more severe):* TDF caused bone toxicity (osteomalacia and reduced bone mineral density [BMD]) in animals when given in high doses. Decreases in BMD have been reported in both adults and children taking TDF. Renal toxicity—including increased serum creatinine, glycosuria, proteinuria, phosphaturia, and/or calcinuria and decreased serum phosphate—has been observed. Children at increased risk of renal glomerular or tubular dysfunction should be closely monitored. Cases of lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

TDF has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥10 kg when used as a component of antiretroviral therapy (ART). TDF is available as a component of fixed-dose combination tablets (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents).

TDF has antiviral activity and efficacy against hepatitis B virus (HBV) and is approved by the FDA for HBV treatment in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥10 kg. For a comprehensive review of this topic, see the Hepatitis B Virus section in the Pediatric Opportunistic Infection Guidelines.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials in Adults Compared With Children and Adolescents

The standard adult dose that was approved by the FDA for adults and children aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg is TDF 300 mg once daily. For children aged 2 to 12 years, the FDA-approved dose is TDF 8 mg/kg per dose administered once daily, which closely approximates the dose of TDF 208 mg/m^2 per dose used in early studies in children.[4]

In adults, the recommended once-daily dose of TDF 300 mg is highly effective when used in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.[5-12] The FDA-approved Cimduo and Temixys (both of which contain lamivudine [3TC] 300 mg/TDF 300 mg) and Symfi (efavirenz [EFV] 600 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg) based on results of prior clinical trials.[6,13] FDA approval of Symfi Lo[a] (EFV 400 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg) was based on a study that compared the use of EFV 400 mg with the use of EFV 600 mg, each administered with emtricitabine 200 mg and TDF 300 mg, in 630 ART-naive adults.[14] See the Efavirenz section for a detailed discussion of this study. In a large randomized controlled trial comparing second-line ART regimens, continuing TDF was superior to switching to zidovudine (ZDV) when given in combination with 3TC and either DTG or DRV/r.[15-17]

In children, the published efficacy data for TDF-containing ARV combinations are mixed, but potency equal to that in adults has been seen in children aged 3 to 18 years with susceptible virus. A recent clinical trial of adolescents without prior documented resistance who initiated or switched to a fixed-dose combination of doravirine/3TC/TDF demonstrated plasma concentrations comparable to those measured in adults for all three agents and >90% viral suppression through 96 weeks.[18,19] In children aged 2 years to <12 years, TDF 8 mg/kg per dose once daily was non-inferior to twice-daily ZDV-containing ART or stavudine-containing ART over 48 weeks of randomized treatment.[20,21] Virologic success is lower in treatment-experienced children and adolescents with extensive multiclass drug resistance.[22-24] In an analysis of genotypic resistance testing performed on 650 unique children at a single laboratory in the Republic of South Africa, predicted intermediate or high-level resistance to TDF was lower for children experiencing virologic failure while on abacavir (ABC)-containing (8.5%) and ZDV-containing (9.4%) regimens than those experiencing virologic failure while on a TDF-containing regimen (24.6%). Clinical data are lacking in children on the efficacy of switching from a failing regimen containing these NRTIs to a regimen containing TDF.[25]

Pharmacokinetics

Relationship of Drug Exposure to Virologic Response

Virologic suppression is most closely related to intracellular tenofovir diphosphate (TFV-DP) concentrations and, for TDF, intracellular TFV-DP is linked to plasma TFV concentration.[26] A modeling study suggests that children and adolescents who are treated with TDF may have higher intracellular TFV-DP concentrations than adults,[27] even though plasma TFV concentrations are lower in children and adolescents, because weight-adjusted renal clearance of TFV is higher in children than in adults.[4,28,29]

Formulations

Special Considerations

The taste-masked granules that make up the TDF oral powder give the vehicle (e.g., applesauce, yogurt) a gritty consistency. Once mixed with a vehicle, TDF should be administered promptly because its taste becomes bitter when it is allowed to sit for too long.

Toxicity

Bone Toxicity

TDF administration is associated with decreased BMD in both adults[30,31] and children.[21,32-34] When treated with TDF, younger children with sexual maturity ratings (SMRs) of 1 and 2 may be at a higher risk of decreased BMD than children with more advanced pubertal development (i.e., SMRs ≥3).[28] Discontinuation of TDF results in partial or complete recovery of BMD.[32,35]

In the study that led to FDA approval of TDF in adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg, 6 of 33 participants (18%) in the TDF arm experienced a >4% decline in absolute lumbar spine BMD in 48 weeks, whereas only 1 of 33 participants (3%) in the placebo arm experienced this decline.[22]

TDF administration disrupts vitamin D metabolism,[36,37] and the decrease in BMD associated with TDF initiation was attenuated in adults with coadministration of high doses of vitamin D3 (4,000 IU daily) and calcium carbonate (1,000 mg daily) for the first 48 weeks of TDF treatment.[38] During chronic TDF administration, youth with HIV who received vitamin D3 supplements (50,000 IU once monthly) had decreased serum parathyroid hormone levels and increased lumbar spine BMD compared with study participants who were not treated with high doses of vitamin D3.[36,39] The serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D concentration was 37 ng/mL in the group with improved BMD. Similar improvements in BMD were seen in youth with HIV who were treated with an ARV regimen that included TDF and who received vitamin D3 2,000 IU or 4,000 IU daily.[40] Measurement of plasma vitamin D concentration is recommended for children who are being treated with an ARV regimen that includes TDF, and vitamin D supplementation is recommended for those with vitamin D deficiency (see Table 17j. Osteopenia and Osteoporosis).

High concentrations of the TDF metabolite plasma TFV have been associated with TDF-related endocrine disruption and low BMD.[41] Plasma TFV concentrations are higher when TDF is coadministered with boosted PIs.[1] Tenofovir alafenamide (TAF), which is associated with lower plasma TFV concentrations than TDF, has less effect on parathyroid hormone levels[42] and causes less decline in BMD than TDF. See the Tenofovir Alafenamide section for more information. Consider switching from TDF to TAF or avoiding coadministration of TDF with boosted PIs in children for whom loss of BMD is a concern.

Monitoring Potential Bone Toxicity

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) **does not recommend** routine dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry monitoring for children or adolescents who are being treated with TDF (see Table 17j. Osteopenia and Osteoporosis).

TDF has been shown to be effective, and it can be administered once daily; however, the use of TDF has been associated with a risk of BMD loss. Because childhood and early adolescence are important periods of rapid bone accrual, and because children with perinatally acquired HIV are at risk for low peak bone mass,[43,44] the Panel favors the use of ABC or TAF over TDF in children with SMRs 1 to 3.

Renal Toxicity

New-onset renal impairment and worsening renal impairment have been reported in adults[45] and children[46,47] receiving TDF. In one study, renal toxicity led to the discontinuation of TDF in 6 of 159 (3.7%) children with HIV who were treated with TDF.[24] Although TDF is clearly associated with a decline in glomerular filtration rate, the effect is generally small, and severe glomerular toxicity is rare.[45,46] Irreversible renal failure is quite rare, but cases have been reported.[48]

The main target of TDF nephrotoxicity is the renal proximal tubule.[46] Case reports highlight the infrequent but most severe manifestations of renal Fanconi syndrome, hypophosphatemia, hypocalcemia, diabetes insipidus, myalgias, bone pain, and fractures.[49,50]

Subclinical renal tubular damage is more common than clinically apparent renal tubular injury. Increased urinary beta-2 microglobulin was identified in 12 of 44 children (27%) who were treated with TDF and in 2 of 48 children (4%) who were not treated with TDF.[51] The risks of TDF-associated proteinuria and chronic kidney disease increase with the duration of treatment.[52,53] Of 89 participants aged 2 to 12 years who received TDF in Gilead Study 352 (where participants had a median drug exposure of 104 weeks), four participants were discontinued from the study for renal tubular dysfunction, with the discontinuations occurring between 84 and 156 weeks on TDF therapy.[20] In adults, renal dysfunction is more common when TDF is used in people with older age or a pre-existing renal disease[54]; in children, renal dysfunction may be more common when TDF is used with boosted PIs than with non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors.[55]

Plasma TFV is the TDF metabolite most closely associated with both glomerular[41,56] and proximal tubular[57] toxicity. As previously noted, plasma TFV concentrations are higher when TDF is coadministered with boosted PIs.[1] TAF, which generates lower plasma TFV concentrations than TDF, is associated with a lower risk of renal toxicity than TDF[58] (see Tenofovir Alafenamide).

Monitoring Potential Renal Toxicity

Because TDF has the potential to decrease creatinine clearance and cause renal tubular dysfunction, the Panel recommends measuring serum creatinine and using a urine dipstick to check protein and glucose concentration before initiating TDF. It is unclear how often creatinine and renal tubular function (urine protein and glucose) should be monitored in asymptomatic children. Many Panel members monitor creatinine with other blood tests every 3 to 4 months and perform urinalysis every 6 to 12 months. Serum phosphate should be measured if clinically indicated; renal phosphate loss can occur in the presence of normal creatinine and in the absence of proteinuria. Because nephrotoxicity increases with the duration of TDF treatment, monitoring should be continued during long-term therapy with the drug.

Because renal glomerular damage primarily increases the concentration of albumin in urine, and proximal renal tubular damage increases the concentration of low-molecular-weight proteins like beta-2 microglobulin in urine, dipstick urinalysis (which primarily measures urine albumin) may be a

relatively insensitive marker for TDF-associated tubular damage. Measuring urine albumin and urine protein and calculating the ratio of urine albumin to urine protein can be helpful in identifying the non-albumin proteinuria that is seen in TDF-associated nephrotoxicity.[59,60] Although these more complex and expensive tests may be used in research settings, in clinical practice, using a renal dipstick to identify normoglycemic glycosuria and proteinuria is the easiest way to detect renal damage.

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Zidovudine (ZDV, Retrovir)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Syrup: 10 mg/mL

Capsule: 100 mg

Concentrate for Injection or Intravenous Infusion: 10 mg/mL (Retrovir)

Generic Formulations

- 100-mg capsule
- 10-mg/mL syrup
- 300-mg tablet

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Generic] Lamivudine 150 mg/zidovudine 300 mg (scored)
- [Generic] Abacavir 300 mg/lamivudine 150 mg/zidovudine 300 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: Zidovudine (ZDV) is frequently used in neonates to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV. See Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV and Table 13 for information about using ZDV to prevent perinatal HIV transmission.

Recommended Neonatal Dose for Treatment of HIV by Gestational Age at Birth[a]

Gestational Age at Birth	Oral ZDV Dose
≥35 Weeks	Birth to Age 4 Weeks • ZDV 4 mg/kg twice daily; *or* • Alternative simplified weight-band dosing

Selected Adverse Events

- Bone marrow suppression leading to anemia and neutropenia, macrocytosis with or without anemia
- Nausea, vomiting, headache, insomnia, asthenia
- Lactic acidosis/severe hepatomegaly with hepatic steatosis
- Lipodystrophy and lipoatrophy
- Myopathy (associated with prolonged use of ZDV) and myositis

Special Instructions

- Give ZDV without regard to food.
- If substantial granulocytopenia or anemia develops in patients who are receiving ZDV, it may be necessary to discontinue therapy until bone marrow recovery is observed. In this setting, some patients may require erythropoietin or filgrastim injections or transfusions of red blood cells.

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplified Weight-Band Dosing for Infants With a Gestational Age ≥35 Weeks at Birth

Note: The doses in this table provide approximately ZDV 4 mg/kg twice daily from birth to age 4 weeks.

<table>
<tr><th>Weight Band</th><th>Twice-Daily Volume of ZDV 10 mg/mL Syrup</th></tr>
<tr><td>2 kg to <3 kg</td><td>1 mL</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 kg to <4 kg</td><td>1.5 mL</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 kg to <5 kg</td><td>2 mL</td></tr>
</table>

Aged >4 Weeks
• ZDV 12 mg/kg twice daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥30 Weeks to <35 Weeks</td>
<td>Birth to Age 2 Weeks
• ZDV 2 mg/kg twice daily

Aged 2 Weeks to 6 Weeks
• ZDV 3 mg/kg twice daily

Aged >6 Weeks
• ZDV 12 mg/kg twice daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><30 Weeks</td>
<td>Birth to Age 4 Weeks
• ZDV 2 mg/kg twice daily

Aged 4 Weeks to 8 Weeks
• ZDV 3 mg/kg twice daily

Aged >8 Weeks
• ZDV 12 mg/kg twice daily</td>
</tr>
</table>

Note: For infants who are unable to tolerate oral agents, the intravenous dose should be 75% of the oral dose, but the dosing interval should remain the same.

Infant **(Aged ≥35 Weeks Post-Conception and ≥4 Weeks Post-**Delivery, Weighing **≥4 kg) and** Child Dose Weight-Based Dosing for ZDV

Weight	Twice-Daily Dosing
4 kg to <9 kg	12 mg/kg
9 kg to <30 kg	9 mg/kg
≥30 kg	300 mg

- Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FDC products that contain lamivudine (3TC). Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when 3TC is discontinued; therefore, hepatic function should be monitored for several months after patients with HBV infection stop taking 3TC.

Metabolism/Elimination

- ZDV is eliminated primarily by hepatic metabolism. The major metabolite is ZDV glucuronide, which is renally excreted.
- ZDV is phosphorylated intracellularly to active ZDV triphosphate.

ZDV Dosing in **P**atients With Hepatic Impairment

- The dose of ZDV may need to be reduced in patients with hepatic impairment.
- Do not use FDC products in patients who have impaired hepatic function.

ZDV **Dosing in Patients** With Renal Impairment

- A dose adjustment is required for ZDV in patients with renal failure[1] (see the manufacturer's prescribing information and Pharmacokinetics below). Do not use FDC products in patients with creatinine clearance <50 mL/min or in patients who are on hemodialysis.

Alternative Body Surface Area Dosing *Oral* • ZDV 180–240 mg per m^2 of body surface area every 12 hours Child and Adolescent (**Weighing ≥30 kg**) and Adult Dose • ZDV 300 mg twice daily Lamivudine **(3TC)**/ZDV *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥30 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet twice daily Abacavir/**3TC**/ZDV *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥30 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet twice daily	

[a] For premature infants who receive an HIV diagnosis, the time to change to the continuation dose varies with postgestational age and clinical status of the infant.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Bone marrow suppressive/cytotoxic agents, including ganciclovir, valganciclovir, interferon alfa, and ribavirin:* These agents may increase the hematologic toxicity of zidovudine (ZDV).
- *Nucleoside analogues that affect DNA replication:* Nucleoside analogues—such as ribavirin—antagonize *in vitro* antiviral activity of ZDV.
- *Doxorubicin:* Simultaneous use of doxorubicin and ZDV **should be avoided.** Doxorubicin may inhibit the phosphorylation of ZDV to its active form.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Hematologic toxicity, including neutropenia and anemia, particularly in patients with advanced HIV disease. Headache, malaise, nausea, vomiting, and anorexia. Neutropenia may occur more frequently in infants who are receiving both lamivudine (3TC) and ZDV than in infants who are receiving only ZDV.[2]
- *Less common (more severe):* Myopathy (associated with prolonged use), myositis, and liver toxicity. Cases of lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported. Fat maldistribution has been observed in patients receiving antiretroviral (ARV) medications.
- *Rare:* Possible increased risk of cardiomyopathy.[3-5]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Pediatric experience with ZDV—both for treating HIV and for preventing perinatal transmission—is extensive.[6-9] However, the mitochondrial toxicity of ZDV leads many experts to favor the use of abacavir (ABC) or tenofovir alafenamide in cases where the individual's age and the results of viral resistance testing do not restrict the use of these drugs.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

Zidovudine—an NRTI (nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor)—has been extensively studied in pediatric clinical trials with other NRTIs (i.e., abacavir, lamivudine, stavudine) as part of an ART regimen. All ZDV-based dual-NRTI regimens had low toxicity and produced good clinical, immunologic, and virologic responses.[10-13]

Infants With Perinatal HIV Exposure

The Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (PACTG) 076 clinical trial[14] demonstrated that administering ZDV to pregnant women and their infants could reduce the risk of perinatal HIV transmission by nearly 70%. See Antiretroviral Management of Infants With *In Utero*, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV for further discussion on using ZDV to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV. A ZDV dose of approximately 4 mg/kg of body weight every 12 hours is recommended for prevention of perinatal HIV transmission in neonates and infants with gestational ages ≥35 weeks. Infants who have been exposed to HIV but are uninfected should continue on the prophylactic dose for 2 to 6 weeks, depending on their gestational age at time of delivery and the risk assessment for perinatal transmission.

Simplified, alternative weight-band dosing has also been developed, and the rationale for these doses is based on the intracellular metabolism of ZDV (see Pharmacokinetics below). The rate-limiting step in the phosphorylation of ZDV to active ZDV triphosphate is the limited amount of thymidylate kinase. Increasing the dose of ZDV will lead to increased ZDV plasma concentrations and increased intracellular concentrations of ZDV monophosphate, but not to increased concentrations of ZDV diphosphate or ZDV triphosphate.

In 31 infants who received ZDV to prevent perinatal transmission, levels of intracellular ZDV metabolites were measured after delivery. Plasma ZDV and intracellular ZDV monophosphate decreased by roughly 50% between postdelivery Day 1 and Day 28, whereas ZDV diphosphate and ZDV triphosphate remained low throughout the sampling period.[15] ZDV dose is poorly correlated with the active form of ZDV that is found intracellularly. Because of this, a simplified weight-band dosing approach can be used for the first 4 weeks of life in infants with gestational ages ≥35 weeks (see the dosing table above). This approach should simplify the minor dose adjustments that are commonly made due to changes in infant weight during ZDV use in the first 4 weeks of life and will make it easier for caregivers to administer ZDV oral syrup to their infants. The changes in weight

and the small differences in ZDV dose will have minor effects on the intracellular concentrations of ZDV triphosphate.

Infants With HIV Infection

The Early Infant Treatment Study in Botswana evaluated the safety and efficacy of initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in the first week of life. Forty infants who tested positive for HIV within 96 hours of birth were started on ZDV, 3TC, and nevirapine (NVP) with successful transition to lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) at 2 to 5 weeks after delivery. Early treatment was found to be safe and effective, with most infants achieving and maintaining viral suppression by 24 weeks of age.[16]

For full-term neonates who receive an HIV diagnosis during the first days to weeks of life, the ZDV dose should be increased to the continuation dose at age 4 weeks (see the dosing table above). The activity of the enzymes responsible for glucuronidation is low at birth and increases dramatically during the first 4 to 6 weeks of life in full-term neonates. This increase in metabolizing enzyme activity leads to an increased clearance of plasma ZDV, and the dose of ZDV should be adjusted when ZDV is used to treat HIV after the first 4 weeks in full-term infants.

For premature infants who receive an HIV diagnosis, the time to increase the ZDV dose from the initial dose varies with postgestational age and the clinical status of the neonate. On the basis of population pharmacokinetic (PK) modeling and simulations and data from studies that have evaluated ZDV PKs in premature infants, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends the following:

- For infants with HIV born at ≥30 weeks to <35 weeks, switch to a dose of ZDV 12 mg/kg twice daily at a postgestational age of >6 weeks.
- For infants born at <30 weeks, switch to ZDV 12 mg/kg twice daily at a postgestational age of >8 weeks.[17]

Clinicians should perform a careful clinical assessment of the infant, evaluate hepatic and renal function, and review concomitant medications before increasing the ZDV dose to the dose recommended for full-term infants.

Pharmacokinetics

ZDV undergoes intracellular metabolism to achieve its active form, ZDV triphosphate. Phosphorylation requires multiple steps: ZDV is phosphorylated by thymidine kinase to ZDV monophosphate, ZDV monophosphate is phosphorylated by thymidylate kinase to ZDV diphosphate, and ZDV diphosphate is phosphorylated by nucleoside diphosphate kinase to ZDV triphosphate. Overall, ZDV PK in infants aged >3 months are like those seen in adults. Although the mean half-life of intracellular ZDV triphosphate (9.1 hours) is considerably longer than that of unmetabolized ZDV in plasma (1.5 hours), once-daily ZDV dosing is not recommended because of the low intracellular ZDV triphosphate concentrations seen with 600-mg, once-daily dosing in adolescents.[18] PK studies, such as PACTG 331, demonstrate that dose adjustments are necessary for premature infants because they have reduced clearance of ZDV compared with the clearance observed in term newborns of similar postnatal ages.[7] ZDV has good central nervous system (CNS) penetration (cerebrospinal fluid–to-plasma concentration ratio is 0.68), and ZDV has been used in children with HIV-related CNS disease.[9]

PK and safety of ZDV, 3TC, and LPV/r in children with HIV and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were studied in International Maternal, Pediatric, Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) P1092.[19] Steady-state PK, safety, and tolerability were compared in children with HIV with and without SAM. Overall safety and tolerability did not differ between the two cohorts, and similar area-under-the-curve values for ZDV, 3TC, and LPV/r were observed in these children who were dosed according to World Health Organization weight-band dosing recommendations.[19]

Zidovudine clearance is decreased in patients with impaired renal function. A dose reduction of 50% is recommended for adolescents and adults with renal failure (creatinine clearance [CrCl] <15 mL/min) or on hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis (see the manufacturer's prescribing information). Although no neonate-specific data exist, based on expert opinion, a similar dose reduction of 50% is recommended in neonates with renal failure (CrCl < 10 mL/min).

The PK of intravenous ZDV in a premature neonate with gestational age of 32 weeks on extra corporal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) has been reported in a single case report. Based on measurements of ZDV plasma concentrations during and after ECMO, the authors concluded that ECMO did not have an impact on ZDV PK and that standard intravenous dosing of ZDV can be used in preterm neonates.[20]

Toxicity

Several studies suggest that the adverse hematologic effects of ZDV may be concentration-dependent, with a higher risk of anemia and neutropenia in patients who have higher mean plasma area-under-the-curve values for ZDV.[6,7,21] A significant reduction in the incidence of hematologic toxicity was observed during a retrospective analysis of infants who received a short course of ZDV (2 weeks) to prevent perinatal HIV transmission.[22] In this study, 137 infants received ZDV for 2 weeks and 184 infants received ZDV for >2 weeks; of these infants, 168 (91.3%) received 4 weeks of ZDV prophylaxis. The risk of anemia (defined as a Division of AIDS severity grade of mild or higher) was significantly lower in the short-course group at both age 1 month ($P < 0.001$) and age 3 months ($P < 0.001$).[22] For infants who develop significant anemia while receiving ZDV for prevention of perinatal HIV transmission, early discontinuation may be considered for infants who are determined to be at a low risk of transmission after expert consultation. A prospective cohort study conducted in Thailand evaluated the safety of triple ARV neonatal presumptive therapy with ZDV/3TC/NVP for 6 weeks in infants at high risk of acquisition of HIV compared with 4 weeks of monotherapy with ZDV in infants considered at low risk. No significant differences were observed in the incidence of neutropenia, hepatoxicity, or severe anemia between the triple ARV and the ZDV monotherapy groups.[23]

Incidence of hematological toxicity was investigated in the ARROW study, which randomized ART-naive Ugandan and Zimbabwean children to receive either ZDV-containing regimens or ABC-containing regimens. The incidence of severe anemia was similar regardless of ZDV use; this finding suggests that advanced HIV disease contributed to low hemoglobin values. ZDV use was associated with severe neutropenia in a small number of children.[24] In a retrospective study conducted in Ethiopia, an evaluation of predictors of anemia among children on ART[25] was conducted from 2007 to 2017. Study participants receiving ZDV-containing regimens were four times more likely to develop anemia than children receiving ABC-containing regimens. Other predictors of anemia in addition to ZDV in this patient population included tuberculosis, severe immunosuppression, and undernutrition.

ZDV is associated with greater mitochondrial toxicity than ABC and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate.[26,27]

Although the incidence of cardiomyopathy associated with perinatal HIV infection has decreased dramatically since the use of ART became routine, the use of a regimen that contains ZDV may increase the risk.[3,5] Analysis of data from a U.S.-based multicenter prospective cohort study (PACTG 219/219C) found that ongoing ZDV exposure was independently associated with a higher rate of cardiomyopathy.[3] As part of the Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study (PHACS)/ Adolescent Master Protocol (AMP) study, echocardiogram measurements were collected between 2008 and 2010 in 325 youth aged 7 to 16 years with perinatally acquired HIV infection. An association between ZDV use and increased end-systolic wall stress was observed in this study. The investigators speculate that alterations in cardiac structure in these children could progress to symptomatic cardiomyopathy later in life.[4] A large cohort study to evaluate the prevalence of cardiac dysfunction in children and young adults <26 years of age was conducted in Kenya.[5] Approximately 28% of participants were found to have evidence of early cardiac dysfunction. Left ventricular ejection fraction negatively correlated with prior ZDV exposure, detectable HIV RNA, and elevated interleukin-6 concentrations.[5]

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Non-Nucleoside Analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

Doravirine (DOR, Pifeltro)

Efavirenz (EFV, Sustiva)

Etravirine (ETR, Intelence)

Nevirapine (NVP, Viramune)

Rilpivirine (RPV, Edurant)

Doravirine (DOR, Pifeltro)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: 100 mg

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablet

- [Delstrigo] Doravirine 100 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Child and **Adolescent (Weighing ≥**35 kg) and Adult Dose

- DOR 100 mg once daily in antiretroviral (ARV)-naive and ARV-experienced people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to DOR

[Delstrigo] DOR/Lamivudine (3TC)/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily in ARV-naive and ARV-experienced people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Delstrigo

Selected Adverse Events

- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Abnormal dreams
- Insomnia, somnolence

Special Instructions

- DOR can be taken with or without food.
- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using Delstrigo, which contains 3TC and TDF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV can occur when 3TC or TDF are discontinued; therefore, hepatic function and HBV viral load should be monitored for several months after halting therapy with 3TC or TDF.

Metabolism/Elimination

- DOR is metabolized by the enzyme cytochrome (CYP) P450 3A.
- DOR has multiple interactions with several drugs (see the Drug Interactions section below).

DOR Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- Dose adjustment is not required in children with mild or moderate hepatic impairment. DOR has not been studied in people with severe hepatic impairment.

	DOR Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment • Dose adjustment is not required when using DOR in children with mild, moderate, or severe renal impairment. DOR use has not been studied in people with end-stage renal disease or in people on dialysis. • DOR administered with 3TC and TDF as components of Delstrigo is not recommended in children with estimated creatinine clearance <50 mL/min.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Doravirine (DOR) is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A substrate that is associated with several important drug interactions with drugs that are strong CYP3A enzyme inducers. Coadministration with these drugs may cause significant decreases in DOR plasma concentrations and potential decreases in efficacy, which can lead to the development of resistance. Before DOR is administered, a child's medication profile should be reviewed carefully for potential drug interactions with DOR.[1,2]
- In a Phase 1 trial (described below under Efficacy in Clinical Trials), DOR plasma exposure transiently decreased by 62% when DOR was started immediately after stopping efavirenz (EFV). A *post hoc* analysis of the Phase 3 DRIVE-SHIFT study (described below under Efficacy in Clinical Trials), however, showed that at Week 4, DOR plasma levels in participants who had switched from an EFV-based regimen to a DOR-based regimen were similar to DOR plasma levels in participants who switched from a protease inhibitor (PI)–based regimen to a DOR-based regimen (all of the regimens in the study used a backbone of lamivudine [3TC] plus tenofovir disoproxil fumarate [TDF]).[3] A similar effect of prior EFV-based antiretroviral therapy (ART) on the pharmacokinetics (PK) of DOR was demonstrated in IMPAACT 2014 (described below under Efficacy in Clinical Trials) among adolescents weighing ≥45 kg who switched from EFV-based ART to DOR-based ART with 3TC/TDF.[4]
- DOR **should not be coadministered** with the following drugs: the anticonvulsants carbamazepine, oxcarbazepine, phenobarbital, and phenytoin; the androgen receptor inhibitor enzalutamide; the antimycobacterials rifampin and rifapentine; the cytotoxic agent mitotane; or St. John's wort.[5,6]
- Drug interactions between DOR and rifabutin induce the metabolism of DOR and **require an additional dose of DOR 100 mg to be administered 12 hours** after a fixed-dose combination of DOR/3TC/TDF or an increase of the DOR dose to 100 mg twice daily.[2,5,6]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, headache, fatigue, diarrhea, abdominal pain, abnormal dreams.
- *Less common (more severe)*: Neuropsychiatric adverse events (AEs), including insomnia, somnolence, dizziness, depression, suicidality, altered consciousness, and altered sensorium. Autoimmune disorder and immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome may occur. Serious reactions can also include severe skin and hypersensitivity reactions.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

DOR is expected to have activity against HIV with isolated non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI) resistance that is associated with mutations at positions 103, 181, or 190. Some single mutations and combinations of viral mutations, however, have been shown to significantly decrease susceptibility to DOR. Specifically, clinical HIV isolates containing the Y188L mutation alone or in combinations with K103N or V106I, combinations of V106A with G190A and F227L, or combinations of E138K with Y181C and M230L have shown ≥100-fold reduction in susceptibility to DOR.[5,6] In children with multiple NNRTI mutations, consult an HIV expert and a resistance database to evaluate the potential efficacy of DOR.

Pediatric Use

Approval

DOR is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg.[5,6] IMPAACT 2014, a Phase 1/2 study (described below under Efficacy in Clinical Trials) evaluated the PK, safety, and tolerability of DOR and DOR/3TC/TDF in children and adolescents with HIV.[4,7]

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

The efficacy of DOR was evaluated using data from four randomized adult clinical trials. The first study was a Phase 2b dose-selection, double-blind trial that enrolled treatment-naive adults with HIV.[8] The efficacy trials included two randomized, multicenter, double-blind, active-controlled Phase 3 trials (DRIVE-FORWARD and DRIVE-AHEAD) in treatment-naive adults[9-13] and one open-label, active-controlled, randomized noninferiority trial that enrolled virologically suppressed adults on ART (DRIVE-SHIFT).[14]

In the DRIVE-FORWARD trial, adult subjects with HIV were randomized to receive either DOR 100 mg (n = 383) or darunavir 800 mg/ritonavir 100 mg (DRV/r) (n = 383) once daily, each in combination with emtricitabine (FTC)/TDF or abacavir/3TC.[9,11] In the DRIVE-AHEAD trial, adult subjects received either coformulated DOR/3TC/TDF (n = 364) or EFV/FTC/TDF (n = 364) once daily.[10,12] An integrated efficacy analysis from both trials (DRIVE-FORWARD and DRIVE-AHEAD) at Week 48 demonstrated that 84.1% of participants who were treated with the DOR-based regimen achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, compared with 79.9% of participants who were treated with the DRV/r-based regimen and 80.8% of participants who were treated with EFV/FTC/TDF. Results were similar across different baseline viral loads, genders, races, and HIV-1 subtypes.[10] In a long-term extension arm for both trials ((DRIVE-FORWARD and DRIVE-AHEAD) at Week 192, of 1,494 participants treated in the double-blind phase, 550 continued DOR-based regimens and 502 switched to DOR-based regimens.[13] In the FDA snapshot analysis, HIV RNA <50 copies/mL was maintained in 457 (83%) of 550 participants who continued DOR-based ART and 404 (80%) of 502 participants who switched to DOR-based regimens. Protocol-defined virological failure and development of resistance were low, occurring mainly before Week 96.[13]

In the DRIVE-SHIFT study, adult subjects with HIV who were virologically suppressed for ≥6 months on two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors plus a boosted PI, boosted elvitegravir, or an NNRTI were randomized to switch to a once-daily, single-tablet regimen of DOR 100 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg or continue their current therapy (baseline regimen). At Week 48, 90.8% on DOR/3TC/TDF had HIV-1 RNA <50 copies/mL, demonstrating noninferiority versus baseline regimen at Week 24 (difference −3.8 [−7.9 to 0.3]).[14] Long-term efficacy in the extension arm at Week 144 showed HIV RNA <50 copies/mL in 80.1% of those who switched to DOR/3TC/TDF immediately and 83.7% of those who switched to DOR/3TC/TDF during the open-label extension in FDA snapshot analysis.[15]

IMPAACT 2014 study data in treatment-naive or treatment-experienced virologically suppressed adolescents aged 12 years to ≤18 years demonstrated efficacy comparable to adult data.[4,7] A total of 45 participants (median age 15 years; 58% females; two ART-naive) were treated with DOR/3TC/TDF. At Week 24, 42 of 45 (93.3%) participants achieved or maintained HIV-1 RNA <40 copies/mL in FDA snapshot analysis, while 42 of 43 (97.7%) achieved or maintained HIV-1 RNA <40 copies/mL in observed failure (on-treatment) analysis.[4] At Week 48, 41 of 42 (97.6%) participants had achieved or maintained HIV-1 RNA <40 copies/mL, and at Week 96, 37 of 40 (92.5%) had achieved or maintained HIV-1 RNA <40 copies/mL.[7]

Toxicity in Clinical Trials

In trials that compared DOR-based regimens and EFV-based regimens, central nervous system (CNS) AEs (dizziness, sleep disorder and disturbances, and altered sensorium) occurred less frequently among the participants who received DOR than among those who received EFV.[8] In the integrated safety analysis from the DRIVE-FORWARD and DRIVE-AHEAD trials, 25.5% of participants on DOR-based regimens experienced CNS AEs at Week 48, compared with 55.9% of participants on EFV-based regimes.[10,16] In a long-term follow-up including extension stages for both trials (DRIVE-FORWARD and DRIVE-AHEAD), at Week 192, <1% of 550 participants who continued DOR-based ART reported serious drug-related AEs, and 1% who continued DOR-based regimens and <1% of those who switched to DOR-based ART discontinued ART due to drug-related AEs. Participants continuing or switching to DOR showed generally favorable lipid profiles, little weight gain, and small decreases in estimated glomerular filtration rates, with no discontinuations due to increased creatinine or renal AEs.[13] In the DRIVE-SHIFT study, among adults who were receiving a ritonavir-boosted PI at study entry, the reduction in fasting lipids was achieved at Week 24 and maintained through Week 144 in the extension arm of the DRIVE-SHIFT study.[15]

In the IMPAACT 2014 study of 43 treatment-experienced (50% who switched from EFV-based ART) and 2 ARV-naive adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years on DOR/3TC/TDF at Week 24, there were no Grade 3 or 4 AEs, serious AEs, or premature study drug discontinuations due to AEs.[4] At Week 96, there were no treatment-related discontinuations due to AEs and no deaths or drug-related AEs ≥Grade 3.[7] While the study did not measure fasting lipids in all adolescents, favorable lipid profile changes from baseline to Week 96 were observed.

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Efavirenz (EFV)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Generic Formulations

- 50-mg and 200-mg capsules
- 600-mg tablet

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- Efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- Efavirenz 400 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Symfi and generic] Efavirenz 600 mg/lamivudine 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of the Drug Appendix for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonatal Dose

- Efavirenz (EFV) is not approved for use in neonates.

Pediatric Dose

- EFV capsules can be opened and the contents used as a sprinkle preparation for infants and children who are unable to swallow capsules.

Infants and Children Aged 3 Months to <3 Years and Weighing ≥3.5 kg

- The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) **does not recommend** the use of EFV in children aged 3 months to <3 years due to highly variable pharmacokinetics in this age group.

Children Aged ≥3 Years and Weighing ≥10 kg

Once-Daily Doses of EFV by Weight

Weight	EFV Dose[a,b]
10 kg to <15 kg	200 mg
15 kg to <20 kg	250 mg

Selected Adverse Events

- Rash, which is generally mild and transient
- Central nervous system (CNS) symptoms, such as fatigue, poor sleeping patterns, insomnia, vivid dreams, impaired concentration, agitation, seizures, depression, suicidal ideation, late-onset ataxia, and encephalopathy
- Gynecomastia
- Hepatotoxicity
- Corrected QT prolongation
- Use of EFV may produce false-positive results with some cannabinoid and benzodiazepine tests.

Special Instructions

- EFV capsules and tablets can be swallowed whole, or EFV capsules can be administered by sprinkling the contents of an opened capsule on food, as described below.
- Bedtime dosing is recommended, particularly during the first 2 to 4 weeks of therapy, to improve tolerability of CNS side effects.
- Administer EFV and FDC formulations of EFV on an empty stomach. Avoid administration with a high-fat meal because this has the potential to increase absorption.

20 kg to <25 kg	300 mg
25 kg to <32.5 kg	350 mg
32.5 kg to <40 kg	400 mg
≥40 kg	600 mg

[a] The dose in mg can be dispensed in any combination of capsule strengths. Capsules may be administered by sprinkling the contents onto an age-appropriate food (see Special Instructions below).

[b] Some experts recommend a dose of EFV 367 mg per m^2 of body surface area (maximum dose 600 mg) due to concerns about underdosing at the upper end of each weight band (see the Pediatric Use section below for details). Weight bands approximate a dose of EFV 367 mg per m^2 of body surface area, with a maximum dose of 600 mg.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- EFV 600 mg once daily

EFV 600 mg/Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Take on an empty stomach.

[Symfi] EFV 600 mg/Lamivudine (3TC)/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Take on an empty stomach.

EFV 400 mg/3TC/TDF

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily
- Take on an empty stomach.

Note: EFV 400 mg/3TC/TDF has not been studied in children (sexual maturity ratings [SMRs] 1–3), and major interindividual variability in EFV plasma concentrations has been found in children in a multiethnic setting. The 400-mg dose of EFV may be too low in children or adolescents with SMRs 1 to 3 who weigh ≥40 kg. Therapeutic drug monitoring is suggested by some Panel members when EFV 400 mg/3TC/TDF is used in children weighing ≥40 kg (see the Therapeutic Drug Monitoring section below).

Instructions for Using the EFV Capsule as a Sprinkle Preparation With Food

- Hold capsule horizontally over a small container and carefully twist open to avoid spillage.
- Gently mix capsule contents with 1 to 2 teaspoons of an age-appropriate soft food (e.g., applesauce, grape jelly, yogurt).
- Administer within 30 minutes of mixing, and do not consume additional food for 2 hours after administration.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Cytochrome P450 (CYP) 2B6 is the primary enzyme for EFV metabolism. CYP2A6, CYP3A4, CYP3A5, and uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferases (UGT) also contribute to metabolism.
- CYP3A and CYP2B6 inducer *in vivo*
- Interpatient variability in EFV exposure can be explained in part by polymorphisms in CYP, particularly in CYP2B6. Slower metabolizers are at higher risk of toxicity. See the Therapeutic Drug Monitoring section below for information about the management of mild or moderate toxicity.

EFV Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- EFV is not recommended for children with moderate or severe hepatic impairment.

Efavirenz FDC Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment

- Because EFV FDC products contain TDF, lamivudine, and/or emtricitabine that require dose adjustments based on renal function, they should not be used in children with creatinine clearance <50 mL/min or in children on dialysis.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism*: Coadministration of efavirenz (EFV) with drugs that are primarily metabolized by cytochrome P450 (CYP) 2C9, CYP2C19, CYP2B6, or CYP3A isozymes may result in altered plasma concentrations of the coadministered drugs. Drugs that induce CYP3A and CYP2B6 activity would be expected to increase the clearance of EFV, resulting in lower plasma concentrations. There is potential for multiple drug interactions with EFV. Importantly, dose adjustment or the addition of ritonavir may be necessary when EFV is used in combination with atazanavir (ATV), lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r), or maraviroc (MVC).
- Before EFV is administered, a child's medication profile should be reviewed carefully for potential drug interactions with EFV.
- Corrected QT (QTc) prolongation has been observed with the use of EFV.[1,2] An alternative to EFV should be considered in children who are receiving a drug that has a known risk of Torsades de Pointes or in children who are at higher risk of Torsades de Pointes.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Skin rash and increased transaminase levels. Central nervous system (CNS) abnormalities—such as dizziness, somnolence, insomnia, abnormal dreams, confusion, abnormal thinking, impaired concentration, amnesia, agitation, depersonalization, hallucinations, euphoria, and seizures—have been reported, primarily in adults. See Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity for information on managing these toxicities.
- *Rare:* QTc prolongation has been observed with the use of EFV, and Torsades de Pointes has been reported with EFV use.[3] An association between EFV and suicidal ideation, suicide, and attempted suicide (especially among those with a history of mental illness or substance use) was found in one retrospective analysis of four comparative trials in adults. This association, however, was not found in analyses of two large observational cohorts.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

EFV has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as part of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy in children aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥3.5 kg. The FDA also has approved the use of the fixed-dose combination of EFV 400 mg/lamivudine (3TC) 300 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) 300 mg, in children weighing ≥35 kg.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

EFV-based regimens have proven virologically superior or non-inferior to a variety of regimens in adults, including those containing LPV/r, nevirapine, rilpivirine, ATV, elvitegravir, raltegravir, and MVC.[4-10] EFV was shown to be inferior to dolutegravir (DTG) in the SINGLE trial in adults, which compared the virologic response of DTG plus abacavir/3TC with that of EFV/TDF/emtricitabine (FTC) at Weeks 48 and 144. The differences were most likely due to more drug discontinuations in the EFV group.[11]

In clinical trials in adults and children with HIV, EFV used in combination with two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) has been associated with excellent virologic response. The 96-week results of the Evaluation of Novel Concepts in Optimization of antiRetroviral Efficacy (ENCORE) 1 trial, a randomized trial in adults, showed that EFV 400 mg used in combination with TDF and FTC was non-inferior to EFV 600 mg used in combination with TDF and FTC.[12] EFV used in combination either with two NRTIs or with an NRTI and a protease inhibitor has been studied in children and has shown virologic potency and safety comparable to what has been seen in adults.[13-15]

Pharmacokinetics: Pharmacogenomics

Genetic polymorphisms in the genes that code for enzymes involved in the metabolism of EFV may alter enzyme activity, which causes a high degree of interpatient variability in drug exposure. CYP2B6 is the primary enzyme for EFV metabolism, and children with the CYP2B6-516-T/T genotype have reduced metabolism, resulting in higher EFV levels in these children than in those with the G/G or G/T genotypes.[16-19] CYP2B6-516-T/T allele frequency varies by ethnicity. In a study of adults from the United States and Italy, this allele had a frequency of 24.4% among White participants, 31.3% among Black participants, and 34.9% among Hispanic participants.[20] A retrospective study of children in a multiethnic, high-income setting confirmed that EFV plasma concentrations can vary among children. The interindividual variability could be explained in large part by polymorphisms in drug metabolizing genes, as well as by age at treatment initiation and time since treatment initiation.[21] International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) P1070 has shown that aggressive dosing with approximately 40 mg/kg of EFV using opened capsules resulted in therapeutic EFV concentrations in 58% of children aged <3 years with the G/G or G/T genotypes, but excessive exposure occurred in those with the T/T genotype.[19,22] Optimal dosing may require pre-treatment CYP2B6 genotyping in children aged <3 years (see Pharmacokinetics and Dosing: Infants and Children Aged <3 Years below).[18,19,22]

Other variants—CYP2B6 alleles and variant CYP2A6 alleles—have been found to influence EFV concentrations in adults and children.[18,23-26]

Pharmacokinetics and Dosing: Infants and Children Aged <3 Years

The Panel **does not recommend** the use of EFV in children aged 3 months to <3 years. Pharmacokinetic (PK) data in children aged <3 years or weighing <14 kg have shown that it is difficult to achieve target trough concentrations in this age group.[22,27]

Pharmacokinetics: Children Aged ≥3 Years and Adolescents

Even with the use of FDA-approved pediatric dosing in children aged ≥3 years, EFV concentrations can be suboptimal.[16,28-32] Therefore, some experts recommend using therapeutic drug monitoring

(TDM) in children who are receiving EFV and possibly using higher doses in young children, especially in certain clinical situations, such as virologic rebound or lack of response in an adherent child. In one study in which the EFV dose was adjusted in response to measurement of the area under the curve, the median administered dose was EFV 13 mg/kg (367 mg per m^2 of body surface area), and the range was from 3 mg/kg to 23 mg/kg (69–559 mg per m^2 of body surface area).[33]

Toxicity: Children Versus Adults

The toxicity profile for EFV differs for adults and children. One adverse effect (AE) commonly seen in children is rash, which was reported in up to 40% of children and 27% of adults.[34] The rash is usually maculopapular, pruritic, and mild to moderate in severity and rarely requires drug discontinuation. Onset is typically during the first 2 weeks of treatment. Although severe rash and Stevens-Johnson syndrome have been reported, they are rare.

Multiple studies in adults have shown that EFV use is associated with low vitamin D levels, and several studies have found an association between EFV use and low bone mineral density.[35-38] EFV induces CYP3A4 and CYP24 enzymes that may affect vitamin D homeostasis. Because of these findings, the Panel recommends measurement of vitamin D in children receiving EFV and vitamin D supplementation for those with vitamin D deficiency (see Table 17j. Antiretroviral Therapy-Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Osteopenia and Osteoporosis).

In adults, CNS symptoms are commonly reported and affected 29.6% of people in one meta-analysis of randomized trials.[39] These symptoms usually occur early in treatment and rarely require drug discontinuation, but they sometimes can persist for months. Administering EFV at bedtime appears to decrease the occurrence and severity of these neuropsychiatric AEs. For people who can swallow capsules or tablets, ensuring that EFV is taken on an empty stomach also reduces the occurrence of neuropsychiatric AEs. In several studies, the incidence of neuropsychiatric AEs was correlated with EFV plasma concentrations, and the symptoms occurred more frequently in people with higher concentrations.[40-43] The ENCORE1 study in adults demonstrated that a dose of EFV 400 mg is associated with fewer AEs and a non-inferior virologic response when compared with the recommended 600-mg dose of EFV.[12,44] A Tanzanian study of children aged 6 to 12 years showed that those who were receiving EFV, especially doses of EFV that were higher than or equal to those recommended by the World Health Organization, had more anxiety and more difficulty concentrating at school than children who were receiving alternative ARV medications.[45] Adverse CNS events occurred in 14% of children who received EFV in clinical studies[46] and in 30% of children[47] with plasma EFV concentrations >4 mg/L. Late-onset neurotoxicity, including ataxia and encephalopathy, may occur months to years after initiating EFV. Some events of late-onset neurotoxicity have occurred in people with certain CYP2B6 genetic polymorphisms who received standard doses of EFV. These polymorphisms have been associated with slow metabolism of EFV and increased EFV levels (see the package insert for EFV).

An association between EFV and suicidal ideation, suicide, and attempted suicide (especially among those with a history of mental illness or substance abuse) was found in a retrospective analysis of four comparative trials in adults and in the Strategic Timing of AntiRetroviral Treatment (START) Trial, a prospective analysis of adults.[48,49] This association, however, was not found in the analyses of two large observational cohorts,[50,51] and no cases of suicide were reported in a systematic review of randomized trials.[39] In people with preexisting psychiatric conditions, EFV should be used cautiously.

Toxicity: Prolongation of the Corrected QT

The effect of EFV on the QTc interval was evaluated in a study of 58 healthy adult participants; a variety of CYP2B6 polymorphisms was represented within this group. A positive relationship between EFV concentration and QTc prolongation was observed.[1] Clinicians should consider using an alternative to EFV in children who are receiving a drug that has a known risk of Torsades de Pointes (e.g., quinidine, clarithromycin) or in children who are at higher risk for Torsades de Pointes.[2]

Therapeutic Drug Monitoring

It is reasonable for a clinician to use TDM to determine whether a person is experiencing toxicity, because the concentration of EFV is higher than the normal therapeutic range for some toxicities.[52,53] Dose reduction or drug discontinuation would be considered appropriate management of drug toxicity. Dose reduction is best performed in consultation with an expert in pediatric HIV. Also, TDM should be considered when administering EFV to children aged 3 months to <3 years due to increased oral clearance and variable PK properties in this young age group. TDM should also be considered when using a lower dose of EFV—such as the dose found in EFV 400 mg/3TC/TDF—in children weighing ≥40 kg. Two weeks after initiating EFV in infants and children aged <3 years, clinicians should measure the plasma concentration of EFV. In cases where a dose adjustment may be necessary, clinicians should consult an expert in pediatric HIV infection prior to adjusting the dose. If a child initiated EFV at an investigational dose at <3 years of age, some experts would also measure plasma concentration at age 3 years, after the child transitions to the recommended dose for children aged ≥3 years.

The currently accepted minimum effective concentration of EFV is a mid-dose concentration at 12 hours postdose (C_{12h}) of >1 mg/L in adults, and concentrations of >4.0 mg/L are associated with CNS side effects.[41] However, the validity of using a single target has been called into question.[54] In addition, a lower limit of C_{12h} >0.7mg/L was most predictive of virologic outcome in a study of 180 adults.[55] Findings from a study of 128 African children (aged 1.7–13.5 years) suggest that the concentration at 24 hours (C_{24h}) threshold for increased risk of unsuppressed viral load is C_{24h} 0.65 mg/L.[56]

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Etravirine (ETR, Intelence)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablets: 25 mg, 100 mg, 200 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate and Infant Dose

- Etravirine (ETR) is not approved for use in neonates or infants.

Child Dose

- ETR is not approved for use in children aged <2 years.

ETR Dosing Table for Antiretroviral Therapy–Experienced Children and Adolescents Aged 2 to 18 Years and Weighing ≥10 kg

Body Weight	Twice-Daily Dose
10 kg to <20 kg	100 mg
20 kg to <25 kg	125 mg
25 kg to <30 kg	150 mg
≥30 kg	200 mg

- ETR is approved for use in children and adolescents who are treatment experienced. The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends that ETR is used as part of a regimen that includes a ritonavir (RTV)-boosted protease inhibitor (PI) (see Efficacy in Clinical Trials and Drug Interactions below).
- Cobicistat-boosted PIs, non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, bictegravir, and elvitegravir/cobicistat should not be used with ETR. Raltegravir and dolutegravir should only be used with ETR with RTV-boosted atazanavir, darunavir, or lopinavir.

Adult Dose for Antiretroviral Therapy–Experienced People

- ETR 200 mg twice daily with food.

Selected Adverse Events

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Rash, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome
- Hypersensitivity with rash; constitutional symptoms; and, sometimes, organ dysfunction, including hepatic failure

Special Instructions

- ETR tablets are sensitive to moisture; store the tablets at room temperature in the original container with desiccant.
- Always administer ETR with food. Area under the curve of ETR is decreased by about 50% when the drug is taken on an empty stomach. The type of food does not affect the exposure to ETR.
- Swallowing ETR tablets whole is the preferred means of administration. Although the package insert contains instructions for dispersing ETR tablets in water or other liquids, using this administration method generally results in lower ETR exposures compared with swallowing tablets whole. Children who receive dispersed ETR tablets should switch to swallowing tablets whole as soon as developmentally able.

Metabolism/Elimination

- ETR is an inducer of cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and an inhibitor of CYP2C9, CYP2C19, and P-glycoprotein. It is a substrate for CYP3A4, CYP2C9, and CYP2C19.
- ETR is involved in multiple interactions with antiretroviral agents and other drugs (see Drug Interactions below).

	ETR Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment • No dose adjustment is required when using ETR in children with mild or moderate hepatic insufficiency. No dosing information is available for children with severe hepatic impairment. ETR Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment • No dose adjustment is required when using ETR in children with renal impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Etravirine (ETR) is associated with multiple drug interactions. A child's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions before ETR is administered.
- ETR **should not be administered** with tipranavir/ritonavir, fosamprenavir/ritonavir, unboosted protease inhibitors (PIs), or cobicistat-boosted PIs.[1]
- ETR **should not be administered** with other non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) (i.e., nevirapine [NVP], efavirenz [EFV], rilpivirine, doravirine).
- ETR **should not be administered** with bictegravir or elvitegravir/cobicistat. ETR reduces the trough concentration of raltegravir[2] (RAL) and dolutegravir (DTG). RAL and DTG should be used with ETR only when these drugs are coadministered with atazanavir/ritonavir, darunavir/ritonavir, or lopinavir/ritonavir.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, diarrhea, and mild rash. Rash occurs most commonly during the first 6 weeks of therapy. Rash generally resolves after 1 to 2 weeks on continued therapy. A history of NNRTI-related rash does not appear to increase the risk of developing rash with ETR. However, people who have a history of severe rash with prior NNRTI use **should not receive ETR.**
- *Less common (more severe):* Peripheral neuropathy, severe rash, hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs), and erythema multiforme all have been reported. Instances of severe rash have included Stevens-Johnson syndrome, and HSRs have included constitutional symptoms and organ dysfunction, including hepatic failure. Discontinue ETR immediately if signs or symptoms of severe skin reactions or HSRs develop (including severe rash or rash accompanied by fever, general malaise, fatigue, muscle or joint aches, blisters, oral lesions, conjunctivitis, facial edema, hepatitis, and eosinophilia). Clinicians should monitor a person's clinical status, including levels of liver transaminases, and initiate appropriate therapy when necessary. Continuing to use ETR after the onset of severe rash may result in a life-threatening reaction. People who have a history of severe rash while using NVP or EFV **should not receive ETR.**

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

ETR is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in antiretroviral therapy (ART)–experienced children and adolescents aged 2 to less than 18 years of age and weighing at least 10 kg.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

In the Paediatric study of Intelence As an NNRTI Option (PIANO) study,[3] ART-experienced children aged 6 years to <18 years received ETR with a ritonavir (RTV)-boosted PI as part of an optimized background regimen. At Week 24, 67% of these participants had plasma HIV RNA concentrations <400 copies/mL and 52% had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL. At Week 48, 56% of the participants had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL and a mean increase in their CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts of 156 cells/mm^3 from baseline. At Week 48, 68% of children aged 6 years to <12 years had plasma HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, whereas only 48% of adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years achieved a plasma viral load of <50 copies/mL.

In a retrospective study of 23 children and adolescents with multi-drug resistant HIV receiving ETR-based therapy in Spain, 78% of participants achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL at a median of 48.4 weeks of follow-up.[4] A separate pooled analysis of treatment-experienced children and adolescents <18 years of age on ETR-based therapy showed 69% (85 of 124 participants) with follow-up data through 12 months achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, and 80% (99 of 124 participants) achieved HIV RNA <400 copies/mL.[5]

In the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) P1090 trial,[6] ART-experienced children aged ≥2 years to <6 years received ETR with an RTV-boosted PI as part of an optimized background regimen. Participants received ETR at a dose of 100 mg twice daily (10 kg to <20 kg) or 125 mg twice daily (20 kg to <25 kg). At Week 48, 75% had an HIV-1 RNA <400 copies/mL or a >2-log reduction in HIV-1 RNA from baseline. The mean increase in CD4 count and CD4 percentage over 48 weeks was 298.5 cells/mm^3 and 5.2%, respectively. Due to the PIANO and IMPAACT P1090 study findings, if ETR is utilized to treat an ART-experienced child or adolescent, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends that ETR is part of a regimen that includes an RTV-boosted PI plus an optimized background regimen.

Pharmacokinetics

In a Phase 1 dose-finding study that involved children aged 6 to 17 years, 17 children were given ETR 4 mg/kg twice daily. The study reported that two pharmacokinetic (PK) parameters—area under the curve through 12 hours postdose ($AUC_{0–12h}$) and minimum plasma concentration—were lower than the corresponding parameters observed in adults during previous studies.[7] However, a higher dose (ETR 5.2 mg/kg twice daily; maximum 200 mg per dose) yielded acceptable parameters and was chosen for evaluation in the Phase 2 PIANO study. Exposures (mean $AUC_{0–12h}$) remained lower

in older adolescents than in adults and younger children, and exposures were lower in Asian participants than in either White or Black participants. In the PIANO study, children and adolescents with ETR concentrations in the lowest quartile (<2,704 ng·hr/mL or pre-dose concentration <145 ng/mL) were less likely to achieve sustained virologic responses (defined as plasma viral loads <50 copies/mL) after 48 weeks of treatment than those with ETR concentrations in the upper three quartiles.[3]

Table A. Pharmacokinetic Parameters in Children, Adolescents, and Adults Receiving Etravirine Twice Daily With an Optimized Background Regimen, Including a Ritonavir-Boosted Protease Inhibitor

Population	Mean ETR $AUC_{0–12h}$ (ng·hr/mL)	Mean ETR C_{0h} (ng/mL)
Children Aged 6–11 Years (n = 41)	5,684	377
Adolescents Aged 12–17 Years (n = 60)	4,895	325
Adults (n = 575)	5,506	393

Key: $AUC_{0–12h}$ = area under the curve from time zero to 12 hours postdose; C_{0h} = pre-dose concentration; ETR = etravirine

Source: Kakuda TN, Brochot A, Green B, et al. Pharmacokinetics and pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic relationships of etravirine in HIV-1-infected, treatment-experienced children and adolescents in PIANO. *J Clin Pharmacol*. 2016;56(11):1395-1405. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27060341.

IMPAACT P1090 examined the PK and safety of ETR in treatment-experienced children with HIV aged ≥2 years to <6 years.[6] All participants received ETR as part of an optimized background regimen, which included an RTV-boosted PI. The tablets were swallowed whole or dispersed in liquid. ETR was initially given at a dose of 5.2 mg/kg twice daily to a cohort of six children; however, at this dose, the geometric mean ETR $AUC_{0–12h}$ values fell below the target range of 60% of the values seen in adults. Subsequent participants were given twice-daily doses of ETR that were determined by weight band: children weighing 10 kg to <20 kg were given 100 mg twice daily, and children weighing 20 kg to <25 kg were given 125 mg twice daily.

The protocol-specified PK targets for ETR were achieved at these doses; the geometric mean $AUC_{0–12h}$ was 3,823 ng·hr/mL, which was within the target range of 2,713 ng·hr/mL to 6,783 ng·hr/mL (60% to 150% of the $AUC_{0–12h}$ value seen in adults). However, considerable intersubject variability was observed, with 5 (33.3%) of 15 participants having $AUC_{0–12h}$ values that were below the 10th percentile for the adult $AUC_{0–12h}$ range (<2,350 ng·hr/mL). The ETR $AUC_{0–12h}$ values were significantly lower in children who received dispersed tablets than in children who swallowed intact tablets: 2,919 ng·hr/mL (n = 11) versus 10,982 ng·hr/mL (n = 3), respectively (P = 0.0008). The Panel recommends that children swallow tablets whole (rather than dispersed in liquid) as soon as developmentally able.

Six children with HIV who were aged 1 year to <2 years also were enrolled in IMPAACT P1090. Although the ETR exposures satisfied protocol-defined PK targets ($AUC_{0–12h}$ between 2,713 ng·hr/mL and 6,783 ng·hr/mL), they were lower in these children compared with historical data in adults and adolescents (geometric mean ETR $AUC_{0–12h}$ of 3,328 ng·hr/mL). Virologic failure, which was defined as a confirmed viral load of ≥400 copies/mL or less than a 2-log reduction in

HIV-1 RNA from baseline, occurred in four of six children by Week 48. Thus, the Panel does not recommend the use of ETR in those younger than 2 years of age.

Given that both the PIANO and IMPAACT P1090 trials were conducted in children receiving RTV-boosted PIs as part of their optimized background regimens, the Panel recommends using ETR as part of a regimen that includes an RTV-boosted PI.

Toxicity

In the PIANO study, rash and diarrhea were the most common adverse drug reactions that were deemed to be possibly related to the use of ETR. Rash (Grade 2 or higher) deemed possibly related to ETR occurred in 13% of pediatric participants and emerged at a median of 10 days, lasting a median of 7 days. The occurrence of any rash was observed more frequently in female participants (17 of 64 participants; 26.6%) than in male participants (6 of 37 participants; 16.2%).[3] In IMPAACT P1090, adverse drug reactions that were reported for children aged ≥2 years to <6 years were comparable in frequency, type, and severity to those reported for adults. Twelve participants (46.2%) developed Grade 1 or 2 rashes within the first 48 weeks of ETR, but no participant discontinued the study prematurely due to rash. Diarrhea occurred in 8 (30.8%) of 26 participants.[6]

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Nevirapine (NVP, Viramune)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Oral Suspension: 10 mg/mL

Tablets: Immediate-release 200-mg tablets; extended-release (XR) 100-mg and 400-mg tablets

Generic Formulations

- 10-mg/mL suspension
- Immediate-release 200-mg tablets
- XR 400-mg tablets

The oral suspension formulation of nevirapine (NVP, brand name Viramune) is not typically stocked in local pharmacies or hospitals. Clinicians should direct pharmacies to ask their drug wholesaler to order it from the Boehringer-Ingelheim distribution center. The distribution center should be able to ship the formulation directly to the pharmacy.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: NVP is often used as part of newborn antiretroviral regimens to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV. See Antiretroviral Management of Infants With In Utero, Intrapartum, or Breastfeeding Exposure to HIV.

Child and Adolescent Dose

- In most situations, NVP is given once daily for 2 weeks to allow autoinduction of the enzymes involved in its metabolism. This may not be necessary in children aged <2 years.[a]
- See Special Considerations for Dosing: Neonates and Premature Infants below.

Immediate-Release Tablets and Oral Suspension

Gestational Age of 32 to <34 Weeks

- Birth to age 2 weeks: NVP 2 mg/kg per dose twice daily (no lead-in dosing)[a]
- Age 2 to 4 weeks: NVP 4 mg/kg per dose twice daily
- Age 4 to 6 weeks: NVP 6 mg/kg per dose twice daily
- Age >6 weeks: NVP 200 mg/m^2 of body surface area (BSA) per dose twice daily; only make this dose increase for infants with confirmed HIV infection.
- This dosing strategy is recommended by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) based on the review of pharmacokinetic (PK) modeling and simulation data. This dosing strategy has not been evaluated in clinical trials and is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Selected Adverse Events

- Rash, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome
- Symptomatic hepatitis, including fatal hepatic necrosis[b]
- Severe systemic hypersensitivity syndrome with potential for multisystem organ involvement and shock

Special Instructions

- The oral suspension must be shaken well before administering, and it should be stored at room temperature.
- NVP can be given with or without food.
- NVP-associated skin rash usually occurs within the first 6 weeks of therapy. If rash occurs during the initial 14-day lead-in period, do not increase the dose until the rash resolves (see Major Toxicities below).
- Extended-release tablets must be swallowed whole. They cannot be crushed, chewed, or divided.
- If NVP dosing is interrupted for >14 days, NVP should be restarted with once-daily dosing for 14 days, followed by escalation to the full twice-daily regimen (see Dosing Considerations: Lead-In Dosing below).

Gestational Age of 34 to <37 Weeks

- Birth to age 1 week: NVP 4 mg/kg per dose twice daily (no lead-in dosing)[a]
- Age 1 week to 4 weeks: NVP 6 mg/kg per dose twice daily
- Age >4 weeks: NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose twice daily; only make this dose increase for infants with confirmed HIV infection.
- This dosing strategy is recommended by the Panel based on the review of PK and safety data on this regimen from clinical trials. This dosing strategy is not approved by the FDA.

Gestational Age of ≥37 Weeks to Age of <1 Month

- Birth to age 4 weeks: NVP 6 mg/kg per dose twice daily (no lead-in dosing)[a]
- Age >4 weeks: NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose twice daily; only make this dose increase for infants with confirmed HIV infection.
- This dosing strategy is recommended by the Panel based on the review of PK and safety data on this regimen from clinical trials. This dosing strategy is not approved by the FDA.

Aged ≥1 Month to <8 Years

- NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose twice daily after lead-in dosing.[a] In children aged ≤2 years, some experts initiate NVP without lead-in dosing (maximum dose of immediate-release tablets is NVP 200 mg twice daily).

Aged ≥8 Years

- NVP 120 mg to 150 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose twice daily after lead-in dosing[a] (maximum dose of immediate-release tablets is NVP 200 mg twice daily).
- When adjusting the dose for a growing child, the absolute dose need not be decreased as the child reaches age 8 years; rather, the absolute dose can be left static to achieve the appropriate mg-per-m^2 dose as the child grows, assuming no adverse effects emerge.

Extended-Release Tablets

Aged ≥6 Years

- Children aged ≥6 years who are already taking immediate-release NVP tablets twice daily can be switched to extended-release NVP tablets without lead-in dosing.[a]

BSA Dosing for Extended-Release NVP Tablets

Body Surface Area	Once-Daily Dose
0.58 m^2 to 0.83 m^2	NVP 200 mg (two 100-mg tablets)
0.84 m^2 to 1.16 m^2	NVP 300 mg (three 100-mg tablets)
≥1.17 m^2	NVP 400 mg (one 400-mg tablet)

- Most cases of NVP-associated hepatic toxicity occur during the first 12 weeks of therapy; frequent clinical and laboratory monitoring, including liver function tests, is important during this period (see Major Toxicities below).

Metabolism/Elimination

- NVP is a substrate and inducer of cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and CYP2B6. More than 80% of an NVP dose is eliminated in urine as uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase (UGT)–derived glucuronidated metabolites.

NVP Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- NVP should not be administered to children with moderate or severe hepatic impairment.

NVP Dosing in Children With Renal Failure Who Are Receiving Hemodialysis

- An additional dose of NVP should be given following each dialysis session.

Adolescent and Adult Dose • NVP 200 mg twice daily or NVP 400 mg with the extended-release tablets once daily after lead-in dosing.[a,b] NVP Used in Combination With Lopinavir/Ritonavir (LPV/r) • A higher dose of LPV/r may be needed in children who also are receiving NVP (see the Lopinavir/Ritonavir section).	

[a] NVP is usually initiated at a lower dose that is increased in a stepwise fashion. NVP induces CYP metabolizing enzymes, which results in increased drug clearance. The stepwise increase in dose reduces the frequency of rash. Clinicians generally should initiate therapy with the immediate-release tablet formulation once daily instead of twice daily for the first 14 days of therapy. If no rashes or other adverse effects emerge after 14 days of therapy, increase the dose of NVP to the age-appropriate full dose of the immediate-release tablet formulation administered twice daily. For example, the recommended oral dose for infants and children aged ≥1 month to <8 years is NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA once daily for the first 14 days, followed by NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA twice daily thereafter. However, in children aged ≤2 years, some experts initiate NVP without lead-in dosing (see the Dosing Considerations: Lead-In Dosing and Special Considerations for Dosing: Neonates and Premature Infants sections below). In children who are already receiving the full twice-daily dose of the immediate-release tablets, extended-release tablets can be used without the lead-in period. Patients must swallow extended-release tablets whole. They must not be chewed, crushed, or divided. Children must never take more than one form of NVP at the same time. The dose should not exceed NVP 400 mg daily.

[b] Severe life-threatening and, in rare cases, fatal hepatotoxicity—including fulminant and cholestatic hepatitis, hepatic necrosis, and hepatic failure—has occurred in people who were taking NVP. These toxicities are less common in children than adults. Most cases occur during the first 12 weeks of therapy and may be associated with rash or other signs or symptoms of hypersensitivity reaction (HSR). NVP should be discontinued and not restarted in children or adults who develop symptomatic hepatitis, severe transaminase elevations, or HSRs.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Nevirapine (NVP) is metabolized by and induces hepatic cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A and CYP2B6; autoinduction of metabolism occurs in 2 to 4 weeks of NVP dosing, leading to a 1.5-fold to twofold increase in NVP clearance. Multiple drug interactions with NVP are possible. Some genetic polymorphisms of CYP2B6 are associated with increased NVP plasma concentrations. The prevalence of CYP2B6 polymorphisms varies among populations and may contribute to differences in NVP exposure. See the Efavirenz section for more information on how polymorphisms can alter metabolic enzyme activity.
- NVP should not be coadministered to children who are receiving atazanavir (ATV) (with or without ritonavir) because NVP substantially decreases ATV exposure.
- NVP increases the metabolism of lopinavir (LPV). A dose adjustment of LPV is recommended when the two drugs are coadministered (see the Lopinavir/Ritonavir section).
- Before NVP is initiated, a child's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions.

Major Toxicities

The following toxicities are seen with chronic dosing, not during single-dose NVP prophylaxis.

- *More common:* Skin rash (some severe cases have required hospitalization, and some cases have been life-threatening, including instances of Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis), fever, nausea, headache, and elevated hepatic transaminases. In the two largest case series of NVP-induced Stevens-Johnson syndrome in children, the incidence rate was estimated between 1.4% and 7.1%.[1,2] NVP should be **discontinued and not restarted** in children or adults who develop severe rash, rash with constitutional symptoms (i.e., fever, oral lesions, conjunctivitis, or blistering), or rash with elevated levels of hepatic transaminases. NVP-associated skin rash usually occurs within the first 6 weeks of therapy. If rash occurs during the initial 14-day lead-in period, do not increase the dose until rash resolves. However, the risk of developing NVP resistance with extended lead-in dosing is unknown, and this concern must be weighed against the current antiviral response and a person's overall ability to tolerate the regimen.
- *Less common (more severe):* These toxicities are less common in children than adults. Most cases occur during the first 12 weeks of therapy and may be associated with rash or other signs or symptoms of hypersensitivity reaction (HSR). Risk factors for NVP-related hepatic toxicity in adults include baseline elevation in serum transaminase levels, hepatitis B or hepatitis C virus infection, female sex, and higher CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count at time of therapy initiation (CD4 count >250 cells/mm^3 in adult females and >400 cells/mm^3 in adult males). Children with CD4 percentages >15% have a threefold increase in the risk of rash and hepatotoxicity after initiating NVP.[3] HSRs have been reported, including, but not limited to, severe rash or rash accompanied by fever, blisters, oral lesions, conjunctivitis, facial edema, muscle or joint aches, general malaise, and significant hepatic abnormalities. NVP **should be discontinued and not restarted** in children or adults who develop symptomatic hepatitis, severe transaminase elevations, or HSRs.
- *Less common (more severe):* In a cross-sectional study of 201 children with HIV aged 6 to 16 years, 43% of whom had hypertension, the use of NVP was associated with left ventricular hypertrophy (LVH) (adjusted odds ratio 3.14; confidence interval 1.13–8.72; $P = 0.03$) but not left ventricular diastolic dysfunction.[4] The median duration on antiretroviral therapy (ART) in this cohort was 4.7 years (interquartile range 2.6–6.4 years). Most participants (76.6%) were receiving a regimen that included two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors and a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). However, the use of NVP was not associated with LVH in a more recent study by the same authors. LVH has been associated with NVP use in adults.[5,6]

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

NVP is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treatment of HIV in children from infancy (aged ≥15 days) onward and remains a mainstay of ART, especially in resource-limited settings.[7-15] The extended-release tablet formulation has been approved by the FDA for use in children aged ≥6 years.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

Randomized clinical trials in children have demonstrated that lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) is superior to NVP in young children but not in older children. IMPAACT P1060 demonstrated the superiority of LPV/r over NVP in children aged <3 years, as have observational studies. PENPACT-1 and PROMOTE-pediatrics showed no differences in virologic outcomes between an NNRTI-based regimen (with either NVP or efavirenz [EFV]) and a protease inhibitor (PI)–based regimen in older children with HIV.[16-22]

In infants and children who were previously exposed to a single dose of NVP to prevent perinatal HIV transmission, NVP-based ART is less likely to control viral load than LPV/r-based ART. In IMPAACT P1060, 153 children with HIV and previous exposure to NVP for perinatal prophylaxis (mean age 0.7 years) were randomly assigned to treatment with zidovudine (ZDV) and lamivudine (3TC) plus either NVP or LPV/r. At 24 weeks post-randomization, 24% of children in the NVP arm had experienced virologic failure compared with 7% of children in the LPV/r arm ($P = 0.0009$); virologic failure was defined as <1 $\log_{10}$ decrease in HIV RNA during Weeks 12 to 24 or HIV RNA >400 copies/mL at Week 24. When all primary endpoints were considered, including virologic failure, death, and treatment discontinuation, the PI arm remained superior; 40% of children in the NVP arm met a primary endpoint, compared with 22% of children in the LPV/r arm ($P = 0.027$).[19] Similar results were reported in a randomized trial that compared NVP and LPV/r in children aged 6 to 36 months who had not been previously exposed to NVP. This finding suggests that LPV/r-based therapy is superior to NVP-based therapy for infants, regardless of past NVP exposure.[16]

Extended-release NVP tablets (400 mg) were approved by the FDA for use in children aged ≥6 years in November 2012. Trial 1100.1518 was an open-label, multiple-dose, nonrandomized crossover trial performed in 85 pediatric participants with HIV. The participants had received at least 18 weeks of immediate-release NVP tablets and had plasma HIV RNA <50 copies/mL prior to enrollment. Participants were stratified according to age (3 years to <6 years, 6 years to <12 years, and 12 years to <18 years). Participants received immediate-release NVP tablets for 11 weeks. Participants were then treated with NVP extended-release tablets once daily in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs for 10 days, after which steady-state pharmacokinetics (PK) were determined.[23] Forty participants who completed the initial part of the study were enrolled in an optional extension phase of the trial, which evaluated the safety and antiviral activity of extended-release NVP tablets through a minimum of 24 weeks of treatment. Of the 40 participants who entered the treatment extension phase, 39 completed at least 24 weeks of treatment. After 24 weeks or more of treatment with extended-release tablets,[24] all 39 participants continued to have plasma HIV RNA <50 copies/mL.

General Dosing Considerations

Body surface area (BSA) has traditionally been used to guide NVP dosing in infants and young children. It is important to avoid underdosing NVP, because a single point mutation (K103N) in the HIV genome may confer NNRTI resistance to both NVP and EFV. Younger children (aged ≤8 years) have higher apparent oral clearance than older children. To achieve drug exposures that are comparable to those seen in children aged >8 years, younger children require higher doses of NVP than older children.[12,13] Because of this, it is recommended that children aged <8 years receive NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose twice daily (the maximum dose of the immediate-release tablet formulation is NVP 200 mg twice daily) or NVP 400 mg/m^2 of BSA administered once daily as the extended-release tablet formulation (the maximum dose of the extended-release tablet formulation is NVP 400 mg once daily). For children aged ≥8 years, the recommended dose of the immediate-release tablet formulation is NVP 120 mg/m^2 of BSA per dose (with a maximum dose of NVP 200 mg) administered twice daily. The maximum dose of the extended-release tablet formulation is NVP 400 mg once daily for children aged ≥6 years.

When adjusting the dose for a growing child, the milligram dose need not be decreased (from NVP 200 mg to NVP 120 mg/m^2 of BSA) as the child reaches 8 years of age; rather, the milligram dose can be left static if no adverse effects emerge and the dose achieves the appropriate mg/m^2 of BSA dose as the child grows. Some practitioners dose NVP at 150 mg/m^2 of BSA every 12 hours or NVP 300 mg/m^2 of BSA once daily if using the extended-release tablets, regardless of age, as recommended in the FDA-approved product label. Regardless of age, the maximum dose should never exceed NVP 200 mg twice daily for immediate-release formulations of NVP or NVP 400 mg once daily for extended-release formulations of NVP.

Dosing Considerations: Lead-in Dosing

Underdosing during the lead-in period may have potentially contributed to the poorer performance of NVP in the IMPAACT P1060 trial. This potential for underdosing, which can increase the risk of resistance, has led to a re-evaluation of lead-in dosing in children who have never received NVP. Traditionally, NVP is initiated with an age-appropriate dose that is given only once daily instead of twice daily (NVP 200 mg/m^2 of BSA in infants aged ≥15 days and children aged <8 years, using the immediate-release formulations) during the first 2 weeks of treatment to allow the autoinduction of the liver enzymes CYP3A and CYP2B6, which are involved in NVP metabolism.

Studies have previously indicated potential for greater drug toxicity without lead-in dosing; however, most of these studies have been performed in adult cohorts.[25] The CHAPAS-1 trial[26] randomized 211 children to initiate ART with immediate-release NVP without a lead-in dose (participants received an age-appropriate dose twice daily) or with a lead-in dose (participants received an age-appropriate dose once daily) for 2 weeks, followed by the standard twice-daily dosing of the immediate-release formulation of NVP. Children were followed for a median of 92 weeks (with a range of 68–116 weeks), and no difference emerged in the frequency of Grade 3 or 4 adverse events between the two groups. The group that initiated NVP without a lead-in dose had a statistically significant increase in the incidence of Grade 2 rash, but most participants were able to continue NVP therapy after a brief interruption. Through 96 weeks, a similar percentage of participants in both groups reached the CD4 count and virologic failure endpoints.

After children had been on NVP for 2 weeks, investigators conducted a substudy that examined NVP plasma concentrations 3 to 4 hours after a morning dose of NVP. Among children aged <2 years,

3 of 23 children (13%) who initiated at full dose had subtherapeutic NVP levels (<3 mg/L) at 2 weeks compared with 7 of 22 children (32%) who initiated at half dose ($P = 0.16$). No rash events occurred in the substudy group of participants aged <2 years; in the parent CHAPAS study, a strong age effect on rash occurrence was seen, with the risk of rash increasing with age. These findings suggest that a lead-in dose may not be necessary in young children.[27]

The standard practice has been to reinitiate half-dose NVP for another 2 weeks in children who have interrupted therapy for 7 days or longer; however, given the current understanding of NVP resistance, the half-life of CYP enzymes,[28] and the results of CHAPAS-1, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends restarting full-dose NVP in children who interrupt therapy for 14 days or less.

Special Considerations for Dosing: Neonates and Premature Infants

The PK and safety of NVP during the first weeks of life were evaluated as part of IMPAACT P1115. This study demonstrated that NVP dosed at 6 mg/kg twice daily for infants ≥37 weeks gestational age (GA) and 4 mg/kg twice daily for 1 week and 6 mg/kg twice daily thereafter for infants 34 to <37 weeks GA achieved concentrations appropriate for treatment.[29] Among 438 infants (389 infants ≥37 weeks GA), measured NVP concentrations were above the minimum HIV treatment target (3 mcg/mL) in 90% of infants at Week 1 and 87% of infants at Week 2. Grade 3 and 4 adverse events possibly related to treatment occurred in 7% of infants (with neutropenia and anemia being the most common) but did not lead to NVP cessation.

PK modeling and simulation were performed with partial data from IMPAACT P1106 and P1115 to determine appropriate NVP dosing in premature infants 32 to <34 weeks GA. GA and postnatal age were significantly correlated with NVP oral clearance; thus, the authors recommended a GA-based starting dose for premature infants treated with NVP and a stepwise increase in dosing at 2-week intervals.[30] These data might underestimate potential drug toxicity in infants of 32 to <34 weeks GA because the doses used to develop the model were lower than the doses now recommended. NVP is shown to be safe in infants >34 weeks GA, so the risk of toxicity in infants 32 to <34 weeks GA seems low. The Panel considers that this risk–benefit ratio may justify the use of this dose in premature infants 32 to <34 weeks GA.

The Early Infant Treatment Study in Botswana started 40 infants with HIV ≥35 weeks GA on NVP 6 mg/kg twice daily (without lead-in dosing) along with ZDV and 3TC at a median age 2 days (range 1–5 days). NVP was switched to LPV/r at Week 2, 3, 4, or 5 according to delivery GA. Although NVP trough concentrations were below the therapeutic target (3,000 ng/mL) for 50% of 2-week measurements, 37 of 40 infants (92.5%) had an HIV RNA decline.[31] Among this cohort, 38 of 40 participants survived to 96 weeks with a preserved CD4 count and low reservoir, which was predicted by a low pre-ART reservoir size.[32] Providers who consider initiating treatment in premature infants or in infants aged <2 weeks should weigh the risks and benefits of using unapproved ART dosing and should incorporate case-specific factors, such as exposure to ARV prophylaxis.

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Rilpivirine (RPV, Edurant)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablets

- [Edurant PED] 2.5-mg dispersible tablets for oral suspension
- [Edurant] 25-mg tablets

Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets

- [Complera] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Juluca] Dolutegravir 50 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg
- [Odefsey] Emtricitabine 200 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg

When using fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

Co-packaged Formulations

- [Cabenuva Kit] Cabotegravir 400 mg/2 mL (200 mg/mL) and rilpivirine 600 mg/2 mL (300 mg/mL) suspension for intramuscular injection
- [Cabenuva Kit] Cabotegravir 600 mg/3 mL (200 mg/mL) and rilpivirine 900 mg/3 mL (300 mg/mL) suspension for intramuscular injection

When using the co-packaged formulation, refer to the Cabotegravir section for additional information.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Infants and Children Aged <2 Years and Weighing <14 kg
Dose

- Rilpivirine (RPV) is not approved for use in infants and children aged <2 years and/or weighing <14 kg.

[Edurant PED] RPV Dispersible Tablets

Child (Aged ≥2 Years and Weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg) Dose

Pediatric Body Weight	Recommended Dose[a] of RPV Dispersible Tablets	Number of 2.5-mg Tablets
14 kg to <20 kg	12.5 mg once daily with meal	5
20 kg to <25 kg	15 mg once daily with meal	6
≥25 kg	Not recommended	N/A

Selected Adverse Events

- Depression
- Insomnia
- Headache
- Rash, which can be severe and include DRESS (drug reaction [or rash] with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms)
- Hepatotoxicity
- Altered adrenocorticotropic hormone stimulation test of uncertain clinical significance

[Edurant] RPV Tablets

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥2 Years and Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- RPV 25 mg once daily with a meal in people who are antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive and who have HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL or in people who are virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no history of virologic failure or resistance to RPV and other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in the new regimen.

[Complera] Emtricitabine (FTC)/RPV/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with a meal in people who are ART-naive with baseline viral loads ≤100,000 copies/mL. One tablet once daily also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in people who are currently on their first or second regimen and who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Complera.

[Juluca] Dolutegravir (DTG)/RPV

Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with a meal as a complete regimen to replace the current ARV regimen in adults who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Juluca.
- Not approved for use in children or adolescents (see the Simplification of Treatment section below).

[Odefsey] FTC/RPV/Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF)

Child (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adolescent and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with a meal in people who are ART-naive with HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL. One tablet once daily also can be used to replace a stable ARV regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Odefsey.

Special Instructions

- Do not start RPV in children with HIV RNA >100,000 copies/mL because of the increased risk of virologic failure.
- RPV concentrations are significantly increased when either RPV or DTG/RPV is administered with a moderate- or high-fat meal.[1] Children must be able to take RPV (or DTG/RPV) with a meal of at least 500 calories on a regular schedule (a protein drink alone does not constitute a meal).
- Do not use RPV with other non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors.
- Do not use RPV with proton pump inhibitors (e.g., omeprazole, pantoprazole).
- Antacids should only be taken at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after RPV.
- H2 receptor antagonists (e.g., cimetidine, famotidine) should only be administered at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after RPV.
- Use RPV with caution when coadministering it with a drug that has a known risk of prolonging the QTc (QT corrected for heart rate) interval or causing Torsades de Pointes (for more information, see CredibleMeds).
- For RPV dispersible tablets, fully disperse the dispersible tablets in 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of room temperature drinking water in a cup and take immediately with a meal. If not taken immediately, the oral suspension should be discarded and a new dose prepared. Swirl the cup carefully for 1–2 minutes to disperse the tablets. The solution will start to look cloudy. The oral suspension can be further diluted with 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of drinking water, milk, orange juice, or applesauce. Swirl and take all the medicine immediately. A spoon can be used to give the prepared medicine if needed. Make sure the entire dose is taken and no medicine is left in the cup. If necessary, add another 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of drinking water (or alternative beverage or soft food), swirl, and drink immediately.
- RPV dispersible tablets should not be chewed or swallowed whole.
- Different formulations are not substitutable. Do not substitute RPV tablets and RPV dispersible tablets on a milligram-per-milligram basis because they have differing pharmacokinetic profiles. When a child weighs ≥25 kg, switch from RPV dispersible tablets to one 25-mg RPV tablet daily.

[Cabenuva] Cabotegravir (CAB) and RPV Kit

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- Cabenuva is a two-drug co-packaged product for intramuscular (IM) injection that is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a complete regimen for the treatment of HIV-1 in people with HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL on a stable ARV regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known or suspected resistance to CAB or RPV.
- Oral lead-in dosing for at least 28 days can be used to assess tolerability prior to initiating IM CAB and RPV injections or people can proceed directly to IM CAB and RPV on the last day of their current ARV regimen.
- Refer to the Cabotegravir section for dosing information.
- Long-acting CAB and RPV for IM injection are not approved for children aged <12 years.

- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FDC tablets that contain TDF or TAF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when TDF or TAF are discontinued (see the Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate and Tenofovir Alafenamide sections). Therefore, hepatic function and hepatitis B viral load should be monitored for several months after therapy with TDF or TAF is discontinued in children with HBV.
- Refer to the Cabotegravir section for special instructions when using CAB and RPV for IM injection.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Cytochrome P450 3A substrate
- Refer to the Cabotegravir section for information about the IM CAB and RPV regimen.

RPV Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

- No dose adjustment is necessary in children with mild or moderate hepatic impairment.

RPV Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment

- RPV decreases tubular secretion of creatinine and slightly increases measured serum creatinine, but it does not affect glomerular filtration.
- No dose adjustment is necessary in children with mild or moderate renal impairment. However, RPV should be used with caution in children with severe renal impairment or end-stage renal disease. These children should be monitored more frequently for adverse events; renal dysfunction may alter drug absorption, distribution, and metabolism, leading to increased RPV concentrations.
- The FDC tablet Complera **should not be used** in children with creatinine clearance (CrCl) <50 mL/min, and the FDC tablet Odefsey **should not be used** in children with CrCl <30 mL/min. Children with CrCl <30 mL/min who are taking Juluca should be monitored closely.
- When using Complera, see the Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate section of the guidelines; when using Odefsey, see the Tenofovir Alafenamide section.

[a] Recommended dose in children who are ART-naive and who have HIV RNA ≤100,000 copies/mL or in children who are virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) with no history of virologic failure or resistance to RPV and other ARV drugs in the new regimen.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Rilpivirine (RPV) is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A substrate, and concentrations may be affected when administered with CYP3A-modulating medications.
- A child's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions before RPV is administered.
- Coadministering RPV with drugs that increase gastric pH may decrease plasma concentrations of RPV.
  - Antacids should only be taken at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after RPV.
  - H2 receptor antagonists should only be administered at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after RPV.
  - **Do not use** RPV with proton pump inhibitors.
- All the rifamycins significantly reduce RPV plasma concentrations; coadministration of rifampin and oral RPV is **contraindicated.** For children who are concomitantly receiving rifabutin and oral RPV, the dose of RPV should be doubled to 50 mg once daily and taken with a meal. Intramuscular (IM) RPV given with IM CAB is **contraindicated** with rifampin, rifabutin, and rifapentine.
- In a cohort of adolescents, RPV exposure was two to three times greater when RPV was administered in combination with darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) than when RPV was administered alone.[2]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Insomnia, headache, rash
- *Less common (more severe):* Depression or mood changes, suicidal ideation

In studies of adults, 7.3% of participants who were treated with RPV showed a change in adrenal function characterized by an abnormal 250-microgram (mcg) adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) stimulation test (peak cortisol level <18.1 mcg/dL). In a study of adolescents, 6 of 30 participants (20%) developed this abnormality.[3] The clinical significance of these results is unknown.

- *Rare:* RPV drug-induced liver injury has been reported.[4]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Transmitted drug resistance to second-generation non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs) may be present in infants and children who have recently received a diagnosis of HIV.

Pediatric Use

Approval

With the viral load and antiretroviral (ARV) resistance restrictions noted above, RPV (Edurant) used in combination with other ARV agents, the fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablet emtricitabine/rilpivirine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (FTC/RPV/TDF; Complera), and the long-acting regimen of cabotegravir (CAB) and RPV for IM injection (IM CAB and RPV; Cabenuva) are all approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg. The FDC tablet emtricitabine/rilpivirine/tenofovir alafenamide (FTC/RPV/TAF; Odefsey) is approved for people weighing ≥25 kg. RPV dispersible tablets (Edurant PED) are approved for children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg. The FDC tablet dolutegravir/rilpivirine (DTG/RPV; Juluca) **is not approved** for use in children or adolescents at the time of this review.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

An RPV-containing regimen has been compared to an efavirenz (EFV)-containing regimen in two large clinical trials in adults—ECHO and THRIVE. In both studies, RPV was shown to be non-inferior to EFV. Participants with pre-treatment HIV viral loads ≥100,000 copies/mL who received RPV had higher rates of virologic failure than those who received EFV. These findings resulted in FDA approval for initial therapy with RPV only in people with HIV viral loads ≤100,000 copies/mL.

A study of antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive adolescents aged 12 to 17 years demonstrated that RPV 25 mg, given once daily in combination with two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs), was well tolerated over 48 weeks. In adolescents with baseline viral loads ≤100,000 copies/mL, 86% had a virologic response at 24 weeks and 79% had a virologic response at 48 weeks. In adolescents with baseline viral loads >100,000 copies/mL, 38% had a virologic response at 24 weeks and 50% had a virologic response at 48 weeks.[5]

People must be able to take RPV on a regular schedule and with a full meal, which may limit its usefulness for some adolescents with irregular schedules. The FDC formulation Odefsey is a small pill and can be useful for certain children or adolescents who have difficulty swallowing pills or want to switch from a multi-pill regimen and who do not have any drug-resistance mutations associated with components of Odefsey.

A Spanish multicenter observational study enrolled 17 adolescents (aged <18 years) who acquired HIV perinatally to receive FTC/RPV/TDF (Complera) as part of an off-label medication use program. At the time of enrollment, 12 participants were on a protease inhibitor–based regimen, 4 were on an NNRTI-based regimen, and 1 had not received ART. After a median follow-up of 90 weeks (for participants with undetectable viral loads at baseline) or 40 weeks (for participants with detectable viral loads at baseline), 86% and 89% of participants, respectively, maintained and achieved an undetectable viral load. None of the participants discontinued RPV-based therapy because of adverse events (AEs); no skin rashes or central nervous system (CNS)–related events were observed. In addition, serum lipids improved, and two adolescents with a history of insomnia and abnormal dreams while receiving EFV-based therapy did not report similar problems while receiving RPV-based therapy.[6]

Another study evaluated 102 virologically suppressed Thai adolescents who were switched from an EFV-based therapy to an RPV-based therapy. Ninety-four of the adolescents remained virologically suppressed through 48 weeks; six experienced virologic failure. Overall, RPV was well tolerated. No improvement in EFV-related symptoms (e.g., sleep, mood, dizziness, headache, concentration) was observed, and no change in quality of life or depression scores could be documented; however, there were significant improvements in some assessments of cognitive and executive function as measured at Week 24.[7]

Pharmacokinetics

The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) has agreed that the use of RPV may be appropriate in certain children weighing ≥25 kg. However, the Panel advises consulting an expert in pediatric HIV infection prior to prescribing RPV for a child in this group.

An international (India, Thailand, Uganda, and South Africa) Phase 2 trial—Pediatric Study in Adolescents Investigating a New NNRTI TMC278 (PAINT)—investigated a 25-mg dose of RPV given in combination with two NRTIs in ARV-naive adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years who weighed ≥32 kg and who had viral loads ≤100,000 copies/mL.[5] In the dose-finding phase of the study, 11 adolescents aged >12 years to ≤15 years and 12 adolescents aged >15 years to ≤18 years underwent intensive pharmacokinetics (PK) assessment after they took an observed dose of RPV with a meal. PK were comparable to those in adults; results are listed in the table below.[8]

Table A. Rilpivirine Pharmacokinetics in Adults and Adolescents Aged 12 Years to <18 Years

Parameter	Adults	Adolescents Aged 12 Years to <18 Years
Dose	RPV 25 mg once daily	RPV 25 mg once daily
Number of Participants Studied	679	34
AUC_{24h} (ng·h/mL)		
Mean ± SD	2,235 ± 851	2,424 ± 1,024
Median (Range)	2,096 (198–7,307)	2,269 (417–5,166)
C_{0h} (ng/mL)		
Mean ± SD	79 ± 35	85 ± 40
Median (Range)	73 (2–288)	79 (7–202)

Source: Adapted from Rilpivirine [package insert]. Food and Drug Administration. 2021. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2021/202022s014lbl.pdf.

Key: AUC_{24h} = area under the curve after 24 hours; C_{0h} = plasma concentration just prior to next dose; RPV = rilpivirine; SD = standard deviation

In a PK study of adolescents and young adults aged 13 to 23 years who received RPV,[2] RPV exposure was comparable to the exposure observed during the PAINT study in participants who received 25-mg doses of RPV without DRV/r and substantially higher than the exposure observed in those who received 25-mg doses of RPV with DRV/r (RPV area under the curve in this study was 6,740 ng·h/mL). No dose adjustments are currently recommended for adults when RPV is coadministered with DRV/r, where a similar twofold to threefold increase in RPV exposure has been reported.[3]

RPV has been reported to have fewer CNS AEs than EFV, and it has been promoted as a replacement ARV drug for some people who experience CNS effects while receiving EFV. However, concern exists that the prolonged half-life of EFV might result in residual drug levels that could have an impact on RPV levels. A study evaluated 20 Thai adolescents 4 weeks after they switched from EFV to RPV. The PK parameters of RPV in this study population were comparable to those in previous pediatric (PAINT) and adult (ECHO/THRIVE) PK substudies. No virologic failure was detected at 12 or 24 weeks, and no participants discontinued RPV because of AEs.[9]

Simplification of Treatment

Juluca is an FDC tablet that contains DTG 50 mg and RPV 25 mg. The results from two trials in adults (SWORD-1 and SWORD-2) supported FDA approval of DTG/RPV as a complete regimen for treatment simplification or maintenance therapy in certain people. The two identical SWORD trials enrolled 1,024 participants with suppressed viral replication who had been on stable ART for at least 6 months and had no history of treatment failure or evidence of resistance mutations that are associated with DTG or RPV. The participants were randomized to receive DTG/RPV ("early switch") or to continue their suppressive ARV regimen. After 48 weeks of treatment, 95% of participants in both arms maintained HIV RNA <50 copies/mL.[10] After 52 weeks, the participants

who had been randomized to continue their suppressive ARV regimen were switched to DTG/RPV ("late switch"). At 148 weeks of treatment, 84% of the early switch participants and 90% of the late switch participants remained virologically suppressed, and only 11 participants receiving dual therapy (DTG/RPV) met virologic failure criteria. No integrase inhibitor resistance was identified.[11] More AEs were reported and more AEs led to treatment discontinuation in the DTG/RPV arm during the comparative randomized phase. In a subgroup of SWORD study participants whose original ARV regimen contained tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, small but statistically significant increases in hip and spine bone mineral density were observed.[12] Although DTG/RPV as Juluca is not approved for use in adolescents, the doses of both component drugs that make up Juluca are approved for use in adolescents. This product may be appropriate for certain adolescents; however, because the strategy of treatment simplification has not been evaluated in adolescents, who may have difficulties adhering to therapy, the Panel **does not recommend** using Juluca in adolescents and children until more data are available.

Long-Acting Injectable Rilpivirine

A long-acting IM injectable formulation of RPV has recently been approved for coadministration with IM CAB as a complete ARV regimen for children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg and adults with HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL, on a stable ARV regimen, with no history of treatment failure, and no known or suspected resistance to CAB or RPV.[13] This formulation has been evaluated in adults as monthly or every-other-month IM injections following an initial oral lead-in daily dose for 4 weeks to assess toxicity.[14-16] These studies in adults demonstrated non-inferior efficacy to standard oral therapy and good participant satisfaction and tolerability through 96 weeks. A follow-on study demonstrated that dosing IM CAB and RPV every 2 months in virally suppressed participants provided similar safety and efficacy to monthly injections through 48 weeks.[17] Additionally, an extension of one study evaluated the benefit of oral lead-in therapy prior to initiating IM CAB and RPV, demonstrating that initial oral therapy can be optional based on the needs and desires of people initiating treatment.[18] IMPAACT study 2017, More Options for Children and Adolescents (MOCHA), is currently evaluating the safety, tolerability, acceptability, and PK profile of IM CAB and RPV in adolescents weighing ≥35 kg and has reported acceptable PKs and safety for the single IM products administered monthly and good acceptability by both adolescents and their parents.[19,20] However, MOCHA has not completed evaluation of the dual injectable regimen long-term, and clinical experience with IM CAB and RPV remains limited. See the Cabotegravir section for more information about this regimen.

Toxicity

In the PAINT study, the observed AEs were similar to those reported in adults (e.g., somnolence, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dizziness, headache). The incidence of depressive disorders was 19.4% (7 of 36 participants) compared to 9% in the Phase 3 trials in adults. The incidence of Grade 3 and 4 depressive disorders was 5.6% (2 of 36 participants).[3]

Six of 30 adolescents (20%) with a normal ACTH stimulation test at baseline developed an abnormal test during the trial. No serious AEs, deaths, or treatment discontinuations were attributed to adrenal insufficiency. The clinical significance of abnormal ACTH stimulation tests is not known, but this finding warrants further evaluation.[3]

Crushing Tablets for Enteral Administration

Some cases report DTG/RPV tablets' being crushed and successfully administered via an enteral tube.[21] If DTG/RPV is administered via enteral tube, care should be taken to disperse the tablets completely and flush the tube to avoid clogging.

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Protease Inhibitors

Atazanavir (ATV, Reyataz)

Darunavir (DRV, Prezista)

Lopinavir/Ritonavir (LPV/r, Kaletra)

Atazanavir (ATV, Reyataz)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Powder Packet: 50 mg/packet

Capsules: 200 mg, 300 mg

Generic Formulations

- 150-mg, 200-mg, and 300-mg capsules

Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets

- [Evotaz] Atazanavir 300 mg/cobicistat 150 mg

Capsules and powder packets are not interchangeable.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA: FDA-Approved Drugs or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate Dose

- Atazanavir (ATV) is not approved for use in neonates and infants aged <3 months. ATV **should not be administered** to neonates because of risks associated with hyperbilirubinemia (e.g., bilirubin-induced neurologic dysfunction).

Infant and Child Dose

Powder Formulation of ATV[a]

- The powder formulation of ATV must be administered with ritonavir (RTV).
- The powder formulation is not approved for use in infants aged <3 months or weighing <5 kg.

ATV Powder Dosing Table for Infants and Children Aged **≥3 Months and Weighing ≥**15 kg[a]

Weight	Once-Daily Dose
15 kg to <25 kg[b]	ATV 250 mg (five packets) plus RTV 100 mg (powder or tablet) with food

Capsule Formulation of ATV[a]

- ATV capsules are not approved for use in children aged <6 years or weighing <15 kg.

Selected Adverse Events

- Indirect hyperbilirubinemia
- Prolonged electrocardiogram PR interval, first-degree symptomatic atrioventricular block in some patients
- Nephrolithiasis
- Increased serum transaminases
- Hyperlipidemia (occurs primarily with RTV boosting)

Special Instructions

- Administer ATV with food to enhance absorption.
- Capsules and powder packets **are not interchangeable**.
- Do not open capsules.
- Because ATV can prolong the PR interval of the electrocardiogram, use ATV with caution in patients with preexisting cardiac conduction system disease or with other drugs that are known to prolong the PR interval (e.g., calcium channel blockers, beta-blockers, digoxin, verapamil).
- ATV absorption is dependent on low gastric pH; therefore, when ATV is administered with medications that increase gastric pH, dosing adjustments may be indicated (see the Drug Interactions section in the ATV package insert).

Atazanavir/Ritonavir (ATV/r) Capsule Dosing Table for Children and Adolescents **Aged ≥6 Years and Weighing ≥15 kg**

Weight	Once-Daily Dose
<15 kg	Capsules not recommended
15 kg to <35 kg	ATV/r 200 mg/100 mg, both with food
≥35 kg	ATV/r 300 mg/100 mg, both with food

ART-Naive **Patients Who Are** Unable to Tolerate RTV

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥13 Years and Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- ATV 400 mg (capsule formulation only) once daily with food
- ATV powder is not an option because it must be administered with RTV.
- For the capsule formulation, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) do not recommend the use of unboosted ATV in children aged <13 years.
- Although the FDA does allow for unboosted ATV in adolescents aged ≥13 years and weighing ≥40 kg if they are not concurrently taking tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) or tenofovir alafenamide (TAF), the Panel does not recommend the use of unboosted ATV in this population. Unboosted ATV is not recommended because adolescents may require doses of ATV that are higher than those recommended for use in adults to achieve target drug concentrations (see Pediatric Use below).

ART-Naive and ART-Experienced Patients

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- ATV/r 300 mg/100 mg once daily with food[c]
- Atazanavir/cobicistat (ATV/c) 300 mg/150 mg once daily with food, administered as single agents simultaneously or as the coformulated drug Evotaz[d]
- Both ATV/r and ATV/c must be used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs.

[Evotaz] ATV/c

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food
- The plasma concentration and, therefore, the therapeutic effect of ATV can be expected to decrease substantially when ATV is coadministered with proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs). Antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive patients who are receiving any PPI should receive a dose of that PPI that is equivalent to no more than a 20-mg dose of omeprazole. PPIs should be taken approximately 12 hours before taking boosted ATV. Coadministration of ATV with PPIs is not recommended in ART-experienced patients.
- Patients with hepatitis B or C virus infections and patients who have marked elevations in transaminase levels before treatment may have an increased risk of further elevations in transaminase levels or hepatic decompensation.

Powder Administration

- ATV oral powder contains phenylalanine, which can be harmful to patients with phenylketonuria. Each packet of oral powder contains 35 mg of phenylalanine.
- Mix ATV oral powder with at least 1 tablespoon of soft food (e.g., applesauce, yogurt). Oral powder mixed with a beverage (at least 30 mL of milk or water) may be used for older infants who can drink from a cup. For young infants (aged <6 months) who cannot eat solid food or drink from a cup, oral powder should be mixed with at least 10 mL of infant formula and administered using an oral dosing syringe.
- Administer RTV immediately following powder administration.
- Administer the entire dose of oral powder within 1 hour of preparation.

Metabolism/Elimination

- ATV is a substrate and inhibitor of cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and an inhibitor of CYP1A2, CYP2C9, and uridine diphosphate glucuronosyl transferase 1A1.

ATV Dosing in Patients **With** Hepatic Impairment

- ATV should be used with caution in patients with mild or moderate hepatic impairment. Consult the manufacturer's prescribing information for the dose adjustment in patients with moderate impairment.
- ATV is not recommended in patients with severe hepatic impairment.
- ATV/r is not recommended in people with any degree of hepatic impairment.

	ATV Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment • No dose adjustment is required for patients with renal impairment. • ATV should not be given to ART-experienced patients with end-stage renal disease who are on hemodialysis.

[a] mg/kg dosing is higher for the ATV powder packets than for the capsules. In P1020A, children of similar age and size who were taking ATV powder had lower exposures than those who were taking ATV capsules.

[b] Children weighing ≥25 kg who cannot swallow ATV capsules may receive ATV 300-mg oral powder (six packets) plus RTV 100-mg oral solution, both administered once daily with food.

[c] Adult patients who cannot swallow capsules may take ATV oral powder once daily with food using the adult dose for the capsules. ATV oral powder should be administered with RTV.

[d] See the Cobicistat section for important information about toxicity, drug interactions, and monitoring of patients who receive cobicistat (COBI) and the combination of COBI and TDF.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Atazanavir (ATV) is both a substrate and an inhibitor of the cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 enzyme system and has significant interactions with drugs that are highly dependent on CYP3A4 for metabolism. ATV also competitively inhibits CYP1A2 and CYP2C9. ATV is a weak inhibitor of CYP2C8. ATV inhibits the glucuronidation enzyme uridine diphosphate glucuronosyl transferase (UGT1A1). Because of the potential for multiple drug interactions with ATV, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions before administering ATV.
- *Nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs):* Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) decreases ATV plasma concentrations, and the effect of tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) on unboosted ATV is unknown. Thus, only atazanavir/ritonavir (ATV/r) or atazanavir/cobicistat (ATV/c) should be used in combination with TDF or TAF.
- *Non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors:* Efavirenz (EFV), etravirine (ETR), and nevirapine (NVP) decrease ATV plasma concentrations significantly. NVP and ETR **should not be administered** to patients who are receiving ATV (with or without a booster). Although the combination of EFV and ATV/r is not commonly used in clinical practice, EFV 600 mg once daily may be used in combination with ritonavir (RTV)-boosted ATV 400 mg once daily in antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive patients. ATV/r should be taken with food, and EFV should be taken on an empty stomach, preferably at bedtime. Coadministering ATV/r and EFV in ART-experienced patients **is not recommended** because this combination is expected to result in suboptimal ATV exposure in these patients.
- *Integrase strand transfer inhibitors:* ATV is an inhibitor of UGT1A1 and may increase plasma concentrations of raltegravir (RAL). This interaction may not be clinically significant.
- *Absorption:* ATV absorption is dependent on low gastric pH. The dose for ATV should be adjusted when it is administered with medications that increase gastric pH. Guidelines for the appropriate doses of ATV to use with antacids, H2 receptor antagonists, and proton-pump inhibitors in adults are complex and can be found in the package insert for ATV. No information

is available on the appropriate doses of ATV to use in children when the drug is coadministered with medications that increase gastric pH.

- Coadministering cobicistat (COBI)—a CYP3A4 inhibitor—and medications that are metabolized by CYP3A4 may increase the plasma concentrations of these medications. This may increase the risk of clinically significant adverse reactions (including life-threatening or fatal reactions) that are associated with the concomitant medications. Coadministration of COBI, ATV, and CYP3A4 inducers may lead to lower exposures of COBI and ATV, a loss of efficacy of ATV, and possible development of resistance.[1,2] Coadministering COBI and ATV with some antiretroviral (ARV) agents (i.e., with ETR, with EFV in ART-experienced patients, or with another ARV drug that requires pharmacokinetic [PK] enhancement, such as another protease inhibitor [PI] or elvitegravir) may result in decreased plasma concentrations of that agent, leading to loss of therapeutic effect and the development of resistance.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Indirect hyperbilirubinemia that can result in jaundice or icterus but is not a marker of hepatic toxicity. Headache, fever, arthralgia, depression, insomnia, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and paresthesia.
- *Less common:* Prolongation of the electrocardiogram PR interval. Abnormalities in atrioventricular (AV) conduction are generally limited to first-degree AV block, but second-degree AV block has been reported. Rash is generally mild or moderate, but in rare cases includes life-threatening Stevens-Johnson syndrome. Fat maldistribution and lipid abnormalities may be less common than with other PIs. The use of ATV/r is associated with lipid abnormalities, but to a lesser extent than with other boosted PIs.
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in hemophiliacs, and elevation in serum transaminases. Chronic kidney disease, including biopsy-proven cases of granulomatous interstitial nephritis that were associated with the deposition of ATV drug crystals in the renal parenchyma, has occurred. Nephrolithiasis and cholelithiasis have been reported. Hepatotoxicity (patients with hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus infections are at increased risk of hepatotoxicity).

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

ATV is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in infants (aged ≥3 months and weighing ≥5 kg), children, and adolescents. Because RTV oral solution is no longer commercially available, use of ATV/r is limited to children weighing ≥15 kg who can use the RTV 100-mg powder packet or 100-mg tablet. ATV coformulated with COBI (as Evotaz) has been approved by the FDA for use in pediatric patients weighing ≥35 kg.

Efficacy

Studies in ART-naive adults have shown that ATV/r is as effective as EFV and lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) when administered with two NRTIs.[3-6] In AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) A5257, ATV/r was compared to darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) or RAL, each administered with a TDF/emtricitabine backbone. Although all three regimens had equal virologic efficacy, the regimen that contained ATV/r was discontinued more frequently than the other regimens because of toxicity, but most often because of hyperbilirubinemia or gastrointestinal complaints.[7]

International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT)/Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group (PACTG) P1020 enrolled 195 ART-naive and ART-experienced patients with HIV aged 3 months to 21 years. Capsule and powder formulations of ATV given with and without RTV boosting were investigated in this open-label study; area under the curve (AUC) targeting was used to direct dose finding. Of the 195 patients enrolled, 142 patients received ATV-based treatment at the final recommended dose. Among these patients, 58% were ART-naive. At Week 48, 69.5% of the ART-naive patients and 43.3% of the ART-experienced patients had HIV viral loads ≤400 copies/mL.[8,9]

Two open-label clinical trials in infants and children, PRINCE-1 and PRINCE-2, studied a powder formulation of ATV that was administered once daily and boosted with liquid RTV.[10-12] In total, 134 infants and children aged ≥3 months and weighing between 5 and 35 kg were evaluated. Using a modified intent-to-treat analysis, 28 of 52 ARV-naive patients (54%) and 41 of 82 ART-experienced patients (50%) had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL at Week 48. The median increase from baseline in absolute CD4 T lymphocyte cell count at 48 weeks of therapy was 215 cells/mm^3 (a 6% increase) in ARV-naive patients and 133 cells/mm^3 (a 4% increase) in ARV-experienced patients.

Pharmacokinetics and Dosing

Oral Capsule

The IMPAACT/PACTG 1020A trial in children and adolescents indicated that ATV could only achieve protocol-defined PK targets in the absence of RTV boosting when used at higher doses (on a mg per kg body weight or mg per m^2 of body surface area basis) than the 400 mg dose per day that is currently recommended in adults. Median doses of ATV, both with and without RTV boosting, from IMPAACT/PACTG 1020A are outlined in Table A below.[9,13] In this study, the AUCs for the unboosted arms were similar to those seen in the ATV/r arms, but the maximum plasma concentration (C_{max}) was higher and the minimum plasma concentration (C_{min}) was lower in the unboosted arms. When administering unboosted ATV to pediatric patients, therapeutic drug monitoring is recommended to ensure that adequate ATV plasma concentrations have been achieved. A minimum target trough concentration for ATV is 150 ng/mL,[14] but higher target trough concentrations may be required in PI-experienced patients. IMPAACT P1058, a study of unboosted ATV PK in ART-experienced children, concluded that once-daily ATV 400 mg provided suboptimal exposure and that administering higher, unboosted doses or splitting the daily dose into twice-daily doses warranted investigation in ART-experienced children, adolescents, and young adults.[15]

In contrast to unboosted ATV, PK criteria were satisfied at a dose of at least 205 mg per m^2 of body surface area in pediatric subjects when ATV was administered with RTV.[13] A model-based approach that used ATV concentration–time data from three adult studies and one pediatric study (P1020A),[16]

along with refined PK modeling,[17] informed the current FDA-approved product label for children aged ≥6 years to <18 years and weighing ≥15 kg.

Table A. Summary of Atazanavir Dosing Information Obtained From IMPAACT/PACTG 1020A

Age Range	ATV Given With RTV	ATV Median Dose (mg/m^2)[a]	ATV Median Dose (mg)
6–13 years	No	509	475
6–13 years	Yes	206	200
>13 years	No	620	900
>13 years	Yes	195	350

[a] These doses satisfied protocol-defined area under the curve/pharmacokinetic parameters and met all acceptable safety targets. These doses differ from those recommended by the manufacturer. Therapeutic drug monitoring was used to determine patient-specific dosing in this trial.

Source: Kiser JJ, Rutstein RM, Samson P, et al. Atazanavir and atazanavir/ritonavir pharmacokinetics in HIV-infected infants, children, and adolescents. *AIDS*. 2011;25(12):1489-96.

Key: ATV = atazanavir; RTV = ritonavir

Cobicistat as a Pharmacokinetic Enhancer

COBI (as Tybost) is approved by the FDA at the 150-mg dose for use with ATV 300 mg in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg. A study of 14 adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years, showed that COBI is a safe and effective PK enhancer when used in combination with ATV and two NRTIs in adolescent patients.[18] PK findings from this study are summarized in Table B below.

Table B. Pharmacokinetic Parameters for Atazanavir Administered With Cobicistat (as Tybost) in Pediatric Patients Aged 12 to 18 Years and Adults

PK Parameters[a]	ATV		COBI	
	Pediatric Patients (n = 12)	Adult Patients (n = **30**)	Pediatric Patients (n = 12)	Adult Patients (n = **30**)
AUC_{tau} **µg·h/mL** Geometric mean (CV%)	49.48 (49.1)	39.96 (52.1)	12.11 (44.7)	9.65 (41.8)
C_{max} **µg/mL** Geometric mean (CV%)	4.32 (49.9)	3.54 (45.8)	1.28 (31.7)	1.28 (35.6)
C_{tau} **µg/mL** Geometric mean (CV%)	0.91 (96.4)	0.58 (84.7)	0.09 (156.2)	0.04 (112.7)

[a] The information in this table comes from the Tybost package insert.[1]

Key: ATV = atazanavir; AUC_{tau} = area under the concentration-time curve over the dosing interval; C_{max} = maximum serum concentration; C_{tau} = trough serum concentration at the end of the dosing interval; COBI = cobicistat; CV = coefficient of variation; PK = pharmacokinetic

Oral Powder

The unboosted ATV powder arms in IMPAACT/PACTG P1020A were closed because participants were unable to achieve protocol-defined AUC target exposures of 30,000 to 90,000 ng·hr/mL based on exposures in adults on unboosted ATV. Children aged 3 months to 2 years who were in the boosted ATV powder cohorts and received a daily dose of ATV 310 mg per m^2 of body surface area achieved average ATV exposures that approached, but did not meet, protocol targets. Variability in exposures was high, especially among the very young children of 3 months to 2 years in this study.[9]

Two separate open-label, multicenter clinical trials assessed the PK, safety, tolerability, and virologic response of ATV oral powder for FDA approval. These included PRINCE-1, which enrolled pediatric patients aged 3 months to <6 years,[10] and PRINCE-2, which enrolled pediatric patients aged 3 months to <11 years.[1] All patients in the PRINCE trials were treated with boosted ATV oral powder and two NRTIs. RTV was administered as an oral solution in PRINCE-1 and as either an oral solution, capsule, or tablet in PRINCE-2.

In total, 134 treated patients (weighing 5 to <35 kg) from both studies were evaluated during the FDA approval process. Table C lists the recommended doses for each weight band and the PK parameters that were measured during the PRINCE trials, including mean AUC. In these PK studies, although the PK targets were met in all patients using ATV powder except those in the 5 kg to <10 kg weight band, the coefficients of variation were large, especially among the youngest patients.

Table C. Pharmacokinetic Parameters for Atazanavir Powder in Children (PRINCE-1 and PRINCE-2) Versus Capsules in Young Adults and Adults

PK Parameters	PRINCE Trial[a] ATV/r					**Young** Adult Study[b]	Adult Study
	Dose: **150 mg/ 80 mg** **Weighing:** 5 kg to **<10 kg**	Dose: **200 mg/ 80 mg** **Weighing:** 5 kg to **<10 kg**	Dose: **200 mg/ 80 mg** **Weighing: 10 kg to** <15 kg	Dose: **250 mg/ 80 mg** **Weighing:** 15 kg to <25 kg	Dose: **300 mg/ 100 mg** **Weighing: ≥25 kg to <35 kg**		
AUC **ng·h/mL** Mean[c] (CV% or 95% CI)	32,503 (61) n = 20	39,519 (54) n = 10	50,305 (67) n = 18	55,687 (45) n = 31	44,329 (63) n = 8	35,971 (30,853–41,898) n =22	46,073 (66) n =10
C_{24h} **ng/mL** Mean[c] (CV% or 95% CI)	336 (76) n = 20	550 (60) n = 10	572 (111) n = 18	686 (68) n = 31	468 (104) n = 8	578 (474–704) n = 22	636 (97) n = 10

[a] This information comes from the Reyataz package insert.[11]

[b] The young adults were also receiving tenofovir disoproxil fumarate.[8]

[c] Means are geometric means.

Note: RTV oral solution is no longer available. Use of ATV/r is now limited to children weighing ≥15 mg who can receive 100 mg RTV using powder or tablets.

Key: ATV/r = atazanavir/ritonavir; AUC = area under the curve; CI = confidence interval; CV = coefficient of variation; PK = pharmacokinetic

Transitioning From Powder to Capsules

For children who reach a weight of ≥25 kg and require the powder formulation, ATV 300-mg powder (six packets) plus RTV 100-mg powder, both administered once daily with food, may be used. ATV capsules and RTV tablets should be used for children who can swallow pills. Bioavailability is higher for the capsules than for the powder; therefore, a lower mg/kg dose is recommended when using capsules. Opened capsules have not been studied and should not be used.

Toxicity

In the IMPAACT/PACTG 1020A trial, 9% of patients enrolled had a total bilirubin ≥5.1 times the upper limit of normal,[13] whereas 9% of patients enrolled in the PRINCE studies had a total bilirubin ≥2.6 times the upper limit of normal.[10,12] The most common laboratory abnormality during the PRINCE trials was elevated amylase levels, which occurred in 33% of patients.[11] Three children (2%) had treatment-related cardiac disorders during the PRINCE trials; one child discontinued therapy because of QT corrected for heart rate (QTc) prolongation, and two experienced first-degree AV block.[10,12] In IMPAACT/PACTG P1020A, three children (3%) had QTc prolongations >470 msec; two of these children came off the study, and all were asymptomatic.

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Darunavir (DRV, Prezista)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Oral Suspension: 100 mg/mL

Tablets: 75 mg, 150 mg, 600 mg, 800 mg

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Prezcobix]
  - Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg
  - Darunavir 675 mg/cobicistat 150 mg
- [Symtuza] Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: Darunavir (DRV) should not be used *without* a pharmacokinetic enhancer (boosting agent).

Neonate/Infant Dose

- DRV is not approved for use in neonates/infants.

Child Dose

Aged <3 Years

- Do not use DRV in children aged <3 years or weighing **≤10 kg**. In juvenile rats, DRV caused convulsions and death; these events have been attributed to immaturity of the blood–brain barrier and liver metabolic pathways.

Aged ≥3 Years to <12 Years

- Dosing recommendations in the table below are for children aged ≥3 years to <12 years and weighing ≥20 kg who are antiretroviral therapy naive or treatment experienced and with or without resistance testing results that demonstrate that they have at least one mutation that is associated with DRV resistance.

Selected Adverse Events

- Skin rash, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome and erythema multiforme
- Hepatotoxicity
- Diarrhea, nausea
- Headache
- Hyperlipidemia, transaminase elevation, hyperglycemia
- Fat maldistribution

Special Instructions

- Once-daily DRV is not generally recommended for use in children aged <12 years or weighing <40 kg. Dosing estimates for these patients were based on limited data, and limited clinical experience exists with this dosing schedule in this age group.
- Once-daily DRV **should not be used** if any one of the following resistance-associated mutations is present: V11I, V32I, L33F, I47V, I50V, I54L, I54M, T74P, L76V, I84V, or L89V.
- **DRV must be administered with food**, which increases DRV plasma concentrations by about 30%.
- DRV contains a sulfonamide moiety. Use DRV with caution in patients with known sulfonamide allergies.

Twice-Daily DRV and Ritonavir (RTV) Doses for Children Aged ≥3 Years **to <1**2 Years and Weighing ≥2**0 kg**

Weight	Dose (Twice Daily with Food)[a]
20 kg to <30 kg[b]	DRV 375 mg (combination of tablets or 3.8 mL)[d] plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)[c]
30 kg to <40 kg[b]	DRV 450 mg (combination of tablets or 4.6 mL)[c,d] plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)
≥40 kg[b]	DRV 600 mg (tablet or 6 mL) plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)

Child and Adolescent (**Aged ≥12** Years and Weighing **≥30 kg to <40 kg**) Dose for Treatment-Naive or Treatment-Experienced Patients With or Without at Least One Mutation Associated With DRV Resistance

- DRV 450 mg (using a combination of tablets) plus RTV 100 mg, both twice daily with food

Child and Adolescent (**Aged ≥12** Years and Weighing **≥40 kg**)[d] and Adult Dose for Treatment-Naive or Treatment-Experienced Patients With No Mutations Associated With DRV Resistance

- DRV 800 mg (using a tablet or combination of tablets) plus RTV 100 mg, both once daily with food

Child and Adolescent (Weighing **≥40 kg) and** Adult Dose for Treatment-Naive or Treatment-Experienced Patients With No Mutations Associated With DRV Resistance

- DRV 800 mg (tablet) plus cobicistat (COBI)[e] 150 mg (tablet) or the coformulation Prezcobix, once daily with food

Child and Adolescent (Weighing **≥40 kg**) and Adult Dose for Treatment-Experienced Patients With at Least One Mutation Associated With DRV Resistance

- DRV 600 mg plus RTV 100 mg, both twice daily with food
- The use of COBI **is not recommended** with DRV 600 mg twice daily.

[Prezcobix] DRV/COBI

Child (Weighing ≥25 **kg to <40 kg**) Dose for Treatment-Naive or Treatment-Experienced Patients With No Mutations Associated With DRV Resistance

- One DRV 675 mg/COBI 150 mg COBI tablet once daily with food
- Pediatric dosing requires coadministration of tablets of different strengths to achieve the recommended dose for each weight band. It is important to provide careful instructions to caregivers when recommending a combination of different-strength tablets.
- Store DRV tablets and oral suspension at room temperature (25º C or 77º F). The suspension must be shaken well before dosing.
- Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FDC tablets that contain FTC or TAF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV infection can occur when FTC or TAF are discontinued; therefore, liver function should be monitored for several months after patients with HBV infection stop taking FTC or TAF.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Cytochrome P450 3A4 substrate and inhibitor

DRV Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- DRV is primarily metabolized by the liver. Caution should be used when administering DRV to patients with hepatic impairment. DRV **is not recommended** in patients with severe hepatic impairment.

DRV Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- No DRV dose adjustment is required in patients with moderate renal impairment (creatinine clearance [CrCl] 30–60 mL/min).
- The FDC Symtuza **is not recommended** for use in patients with an estimated CrCl <30 mL/min.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing **≥40 kg) and Adult** Dose for Treatment-Naive or Treatment-Experienced Patients With No Mutations Associated With DRV Resistance • One DRV 800-mg/COBI 150-mg tablet once daily with food Note: The latest U.S. Food and Drug Administration label for COBI includes additional recommended dosing for treatment-naive or treatment-experienced children weighing ≥25 kg to <30 kg with no mutations associated with DRV resistance. Children in this category may take COBI 150 mg with DRV 600 mg once daily with food. Please see the Cobicistat section for more information on pediatric dosing of standalone COBI. [Symtuza] DRV/COBI/Emtricitabine (FTC)/Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF) *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with food in antiretroviral-naive patients or in patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months with no known mutations associated with resistance to DRV or tenofovir.	

[a] Once-daily dosing of DRV is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), but the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) does not generally recommend using this dosing schedule in children (see Frequency of Administration below).

[b] Ritonavir (RTV) oral solution is no longer available. Use of DRV boosted with RTV is now limited to children weighing ≥20 kg who can receive RTV 100 mg using powder or tablets.

[c] The volumes for the 375-mg and 450-mg DRV doses are rounded for dosing convenience of suspension.

[d] Some Panel members recommend using the FDA-approved dose of once-daily DRV 675 mg (administered using a combination of tablets) plus RTV 100 mg once daily for adolescents weighing ≥30 kg to <40 kg (see Table B below).

[e] See Cobicistat for important information about toxicity, drug interactions, and monitoring in patients who receive COBI.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Darunavir (DRV) is primarily metabolized by cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4. Both ritonavir (RTV) and cobicistat (COBI) are inhibitors of CYP3A4, thereby increasing the plasma concentration of DRV. Coadministration of DRV plus RTV (DRV/r) or DRV plus COBI (DRV/c) with drugs that are highly dependent on CYP3A clearance creates potential for multiple drug–drug interactions and may be associated with suboptimal efficacy or serious and/or life-threatening events.
- Coadministration of several drugs, including other protease inhibitors (PIs) and rifampin, is **contraindicated** with DRV/r and DRV/c. A study involving adults with HIV suggested that etravirine (ETR) may reduce serum DRV concentrations by induction of CYP3A5, which is more commonly expressed in individuals of African descent.[1] Before administering DRV with a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer (boosting agent), a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions.

- When twice-daily DRV/r was used in combination with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) in 13 patients aged 13 to 16 years with HIV, both TDF and DRV exposures were lower than those found in adults treated with the same combination.[2] No dose adjustment is recommended when using DRV/r with TDF, but caution is advised and therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) may be useful.[3] Data from the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) protocol P1058A indicate that coadministering once-daily DRV/r with once-daily or twice-daily ETR in children, adolescents, and young adults aged 9 years to <24 years did not have a significant effect on DRV plasma concentrations.[4] When DRV/r was coadministered with ETR twice daily in pediatric patients, target concentrations for both DRV and ETR were achieved.[5] DRV PK were not affected when DRV was coadministered with rilpivirine (RPV) in a study of adolescents and young adults.[6] DRV/r coadministration increased RPV exposure twofold to threefold; close monitoring for RPV-related adverse events is advisable.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache, and fatigue.
- *Less common:* Skin rash, including erythema multiforme and Stevens-Johnson syndrome; fever and elevated levels of hepatic transaminases; lipid abnormalities; and crystalluria.
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in people with hemophilia, and hepatic dysfunction, particularly in patients with underlying risk factors, such as hepatitis B or hepatitis C virus coinfection.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

DRV/r is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a component of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy in treatment-naive and treatment-experienced children aged ≥3 years. Because RTV oral solution is no longer commercially available, use of DRV/r is limited to children weighing ≥20 kg who can use the RTV 100-mg powder packet or 100-mg tablet.

DRV is approved by the FDA to be administered with COBI (Tybost) boosting in pediatric patients weighing ≥40 kg. The fixed-dose combination (FDCs) DRV/c (Prezcobix) is approved by the FDA for use in pediatric patients weighing ≥25 kg to <40 kg at a dose of DRV 675 mg/COBI 150 mg and for use in people weighing ≥40 kg at a dose of DRV 800 mg/COBI 150 mg. The latest FDA label for COBI (Tybost) includes additional recommended dosing for children weighing ≥25 kg to <30 kg. DRV/c/emtricitabine (FTC)/tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) (Symtuza) is approved by the FDA for use in pediatric patients weighing ≥40 kg.

A pediatric formulation of Symtuza (DRV 675 mg/COBI 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg) is being developed as a scored tablet (to enable splitting) for use in the European Union; this formulation **is not** approved by the FDA). This FDC was found to be bioequivalent to coadministration of all of the

individual formulations of each component of the FDC. The swallowability and acceptability of a placebo tablet (size 21 × 11 × 7 mm) matching this pediatric fixed-dose formulation has been studied in an open-label randomized crossover PK bioequivalence clinical trial in 24 virologically suppressed children with HIV aged 6 years to <12 years of age weighing 25 kg to <40 kg.[7,8] Participants were also taking their stable antiretroviral therapy (ART) regimen. Twenty-three of 24 (95.8%) participants were able to swallow the whole and the split tablets after one or two attempts; >70% of participants rated the tablets to be acceptable or good, and whole tablets were favored over split tablets.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

In an international, multisite clinical trial (TMC114-TiDP29-C228) that enrolled treatment-experienced children aged 3 years to <6 years, 17 (81%) of 21 children who received DRV/r twice daily had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 48.[9-11]

A randomized, open-label, multicenter pediatric trial[11] that evaluated twice-daily DRV/r among 80 treatment-experienced children aged 6 years to <18 years reported that 66% of patients had plasma HIV RNA <400 copies/mL and 51% had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL at Week 24.

Once-daily DRV/r has been investigated in a small study involving 12 treatment-experienced children aged 6 to 12 years who had maintained HIV viral loads <50 copies/mL for at least 6 months.[12] All but one child continued to have undetectable viral loads during a median of 11.6 months of follow-up (range 0.5–14.2 months). The remaining child had detectable viral load measurements between 20 copies/mL and 200 copies/mL on three occasions during a 3-month period before, again, becoming undetectable without a change in regimen.

In one study, 12 participants aged 12 to 17 years received DRV/r once daily.[13] After 48 weeks, all but one participant had viral loads <50 copies/mL.

The SMILE (Penta-17-ANRS 152) trial released results[14] showing that a nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI)–sparing regimen of integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) plus boosted DRV was non-inferior to the standard of care (SOC) (i.e., 2 NRTI + boosted PI/non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor) at 48 weeks in maintaining virologic suppression among children and adolescents with HIV aged 6 to 18 years. Eight (5%) of 158 participants in the INSTI+DRV/r arm and 12 (7.5%) of 160 in the SOC arm had HIV viral loads ≥50 copies/mL at 48 weeks post-enrollment; difference of −2.5% (95% CI, −7.6% to 2.5%), meeting the non-inferiority margin of 10%. Safety was similar between the arms. There were small significant differences between the two arms in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count mean change from baseline, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, weight, and body mass index (BMI): CD4 and HDL decreased more in the INSTI+DRV/r arm than in the SOC arm, and weight and BMI had greater increases in the INSTI+DRV/r arm than the SOC arm over the 48 weeks. The difference between the INSTI+DRV/r experimental arm compared to SOC in mean CD4 count change and mean HDL change from baseline were −48.3 cells/mm^3 (95% CI, −93.4 to −3.2; P = 0.036) and −4.1 mg/dL (95% CI, −6.7 to −1.4; P = 0.003), respectively. The differences in weight and BMI between the INSTI+DRV/r experimental arm and the SOC were 1.97 kg (95% CI, 1.1–2.9; P < 0.001) and 0.66 kg/m^2 (95% CI, 0.3–1.0; P < 0.001)], respectively.

Observational Data

An observational cohort[15] of children and youth <25 years of age on DRV-based ART in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa found that, over a median duration of follow-up of 28.3 months, 771 (87.9%) were alive at the end of follow-up for the study, 29 (3.6%) died, and 69 (8.5%) moved away or were lost to follow-up; 809 participants had final outcomes. Males were marginally less likely to be retained in care than females (adjusted hazard ratio 0.85, 95% CI 0.72–1.0), and adolescents aged 15 to 19 years were more likely to die than children younger than 10 years (adjusted subdistribution hazard ratio 4.20, 95% CI, 1.37–12.87).

Pharmacokinetics and Dosing

Pharmacokinetics in Children Aged 3 Years to <6 Years

Twenty-one children aged 3 years to <6 years and weighing 10 kg to <20 kg received twice-daily DRV/r oral suspension. These children had experienced virologic failure on their previous ARV regimens and had fewer than three DRV resistance mutations, confirmed by genotypic testing.[9,10,16] The DRV area under the curve from 0 to 12 hours ($AUC_{0–12h}$), measured as a percent of the adult area under the curve (AUC) value,[9,10,17] was 126% overall, 143% in children weighing 10 kg to <15 kg, and 121% in children weighing 15 kg to <20 kg.

The CHAPAS-4 trial included a PK substudy[18] in a subset of 104 of children aged 3 to 15 years weighing ≥14 kg and receiving a failing first-line ART. The children were randomized to either TAF/FTC (dosed according to World Health Organization–recommended weight bands) or SOC dual-NRTI treatment, in combination with dolutegravir (DTG) or a boosted PI, and had plasma PK data collected at steady-state. TAF was administered in combination with DTG (n = 18), DRV/r (n = 34), or lopinavir/ritonavir (n = 20), and the measured geometric mean (CV%) TAF AUC from dose to the time of the last measurable concentration (AUC_{last}) for those combinations was 284.5 (79), 232.0 (61), and 210.2 (98) ng·hour/mL, respectively, similar to reference values in adults taking TAF 10 mg in conjunction with a boosted PI (adult dosing recommended by the European Medicines Agency). One hundred percent of the children had TAF AUC_{last} >55 ng·hour/mL, the predefined target value associated with favorable virologic efficacy in adults. In combination with atazanavir/ritonavir (n = 32), TAF AUC_{last} was higher, at 511.4 (68) ng·hour/mL, and TAF C_{max} was 86% higher than the C_{max} in adults taking TAF 25 mg with boosted PI. In all of these combinations, tenofovir geometric mean (CV%) area under the concentration–time curve from dose to 24 hours after dose and C_{max} was below the exposures observed in adults taking TAF 25 mg once daily in conjunction with boosted PI (TAF 25 mg dosing for adults is recommended by the FDA, except in the case of the FDC DRV/c/FTC/TAF, in which case the dose is 10 mg of TAF). This study provided reassurance that in children aged 3 to 15 years, TAF can achieve safe and well-tolerated exposures when used in conjunction with DRV/r. See the Tenofovir Alafenamide section for more information.

Pharmacokinetics in Children Aged ≥6 Years

Initial pediatric PK evaluation of DRV tablets and RTV oral solution or tablets was based on a Phase 2 randomized, open-label, multicenter study that enrolled 80 treatment-experienced children and adolescents aged 6 years to <18 years and weighing ≥20 kg.[19] Part 1 of the trial used a weight-adjusted dose of DRV (9–15 mg/kg) and RTV (1.5–2.5 mg/kg) twice daily, approximating the standard adult dose of DRV/r 600 mg/100 mg twice daily on a per-weight basis. This dose resulted in inadequate drug exposure in the pediatric population studied, with a 24-hour AUC ($AUC_{0–24h}$) that

was 81% of the $AUC_{0–24h}$ observed in adults and a predose concentration (C_{0h}) that was 91% of the C_{0h} observed in adults. A pediatric dose that was 20% to 33% higher than the directly scaled adult dose was needed to achieve a drug exposure that was similar to that found in adults, and this was the dose selected for Part 2 of the study. The higher dose used for the safety and efficacy evaluation was DRV 11 to 19 mg/kg and RTV 1.5 to 2.5 mg/kg twice daily. This dose resulted in a DRV $AUC_{0–24h}$ of 123.3 mcg·h/mL (range 71.9–201.5 mcg·h/mL) and a C_{0h} of 3,693 ng/mL (range 1,842–7,191 ng/mL), representing 102% and 114% of the respective values in adults. Doses were given twice daily and were stratified into body-weight bands of 20 kg to <30 kg and 30 kg to <40 kg. The current weight-band doses of twice-daily DRV/r for treatment-experienced pediatric patients weighing >20 kg to <40 kg were selected using the findings from the safety and efficacy portion of this study (see Table A below).

A small study that involved 12 treatment-experienced children aged 6 to 12 years examined the PK and efficacy of DRV/r once daily administered in combination with abacavir and lamivudine.[12] All participants had maintained HIV plasma viral loads <50 copies/mL for at least 6 months prior to beginning this regimen. The weight-based doses used for once-daily DRV/r were based on a prior modeling study[20]: 600 mg/100 mg for patients weighing 15 to 30 kg, 675 mg/100 mg for patients weighing 30 to 40 kg, and 800 mg/100 mg for patients weighing >40 kg. The geometric mean $AUC_{0–24h}$ was below the study target of 80% of the value seen in adults (63.1 mg·h/L vs. 71.8 mg·h/L), but the trough values that were observed at 23.1 hours to 25.1 hours after the previous dose exceeded the trough plasma concentration recommended for treatment-experienced adults (0.55 mg/L).[21] One child developed neuropsychiatric symptoms (anxiety and hallucinations) and was removed from study. This child did not have an excessive exposure to DRV; the $AUC_{0–24h}$ was 47.8 mg·h/L.

A population PK sub-study was done as part of the SMILE trial[22], examining the protein binding and PK of DRV among virologically suppressed adolescents on an INSTI and DRV/r. A total of 443 plasma PK samples from 152 adolescents were incorporated. The median unbound-to–total concentration ratio was 5.4%; DRV displays a total protein binding in plasma of 94.5% (73.7% bound to alpha-1 glycoprotein and 20.8% bound to albumin). A significant impact of alpha-1 glycoprotein concentrations on DRV clearance was observed. The simulations showed that 86.8% of DRV total trough concentrations (C_{trough}) were above 0.55 mg/L (10 x protein binding–adjusted EC_{50}) for wild-type HIV-1, and 86.8% of DRV *unbound* C_{trough} were above 0.0243 mg/L (10 x PA EC_{90}) for wild-type HIV-1. Overall, individual C_{trough} in adolescents given DRV/r 800 mg/100 mg daily were in line with those observed in adults given DRV/r 800/100 mg daily. This provided reassuring evidence of satisfactory exposures in adolescents given an adult dosing regimen of DRV/r.

Table A. Darunavir Pharmacokinetics With Twice-Daily Administration With Ritonavir and Optimized Background Therapy in Children, Adolescents, and Adults

Population	n	Dose of DRV/r	AUC_{12h} (mcg·h/mL) Median[a]	C_{0h} (ng/mL) Median[a]
Children Weighing **10 kg** to **<15 kg**[a]	13	20 mg/kg/3 mg/kg	66.0	3,533
Children Weighing **10 kg** to **<15 kg**[a]	4	25 mg/kg/3 mg/kg	116.0	8,522
Children Weighing **15 kg** to **<20 kg**[a]	11	20 mg/kg/3 mg/kg	54.2	3,387
Children Weighing **15 kg** to **<20 kg**[a]	14	25 mg/kg/3 mg/kg	68.6	4,365

Table A. Darunavir Pharmacokinetics With Twice-Daily Administration With Ritonavir and Optimized Background Therapy in Children, Adolescents, and Adults

Population	n	Dose of DRV/r	AUC_{12h} (mcg·h/mL) Median[a]	C_{0h} (ng/mL) Median[a]
Children Aged 6 Years to **<12** Years[b]	24	Determined by weight bands[b]	56.4	3,354
Adolescents **Aged 12** Years to **<18** Years[b]	50	Determined by weight bands[b]	66.4	4,059
Adults Aged **>18** Years[c] (Three Studies)	285/278/119	600 mg/100 mg	54.7–61.7	3,197–3,539

[a] Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration. FDA clinical pharmacologic review of darunavir. 2011. Available at: https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/DevelopmentResources/UCM287674.pdf.

[b] DRV/r was administered at doses of 375 mg/50 mg twice daily for patients weighing 20 to <30 kg, 450 mg/60 mg twice daily for patients weighing 30 to <40 kg, and 600 mg/100 mg twice daily for patients weighing ≥40 kg. Data from the 2008 FDA pharmacokinetics review. Available at: https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/DevelopmentResources/ucm129567.pdf.

[c] Source: Darunavir [package insert]. Food and Drug Administration. 2016. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2016/021976s043,202895s017lbledt.pdf.

Note: Ritonavir (RTV) oral solution is no longer available. Use of DRV/r is now limited to children weighing ≥20 mg who can receive 100 mg RTV using powder or tablets.

Key: AUC_{12h} = 12-hour area under the curve; C_{0h} = predose concentration; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir

Dosing

Pharmacokinetic Enhancers

DRV should not be used without a PK enhancer (boosting agent). RTV may be used as a boosting agent in children and adults. COBI may be used as a boosting agent in children weighing ≥40 kg and adults.

A study that enrolled 19 Thai children used the RTV 100-mg capsule twice daily as the boosting dose for twice-daily DRV 375 mg (in children weighing 20 kg to <30 kg), 450 mg (in children weighing 30–40 kg), and 600 mg (in children weighing ≥40 kg).[23] The DRV exposures with RTV 100 mg twice daily were similar to those obtained in the studies with lower (<100 mg) doses of liquid RTV.[19,23] The tolerability and PK data from this small study support the use of RTV 100 mg for boosting using either the powder or tablet formulation in children weighing ≥20 kg. No data are available on the safety and tolerability of using DRV with the RTV 100-mg tablet or powder formulation in children weighing <20 kg.

Data on the dosing of DRV/c are available primarily for adult patients.[24] Data on once-daily use of the FDC tablet DRV/c 800 mg/150 mg (Prezcobix) showed bioavailability that was comparable to the bioavailability observed with the use of DRV/r 800 mg/100 mg once daily.[21]

In an open-label switch study, eight adolescent patients with a median age of 14 years (range 12–17 years) who received DRV/c had DRV exposures (AUC_{tau}) that were similar to those observed in adults, except for a lower trough concentration at the end of the dosing interval (C_{tau}). The median DRV C_{tau} (494 ng/mL) was above the protein binding–adjusted half-maximal inhibitory concentration for wild-type virus (55 ng/mL). Adolescent patients in this study received the adult

dose of COBI 150 mg daily. DRV dosing was based on weight, with patients who weighed ≥40 kg receiving DRV 800 mg once daily and patients who weighed 30 kg to <40 kg receiving DRV 675 mg once daily. In this small sample, 95.5% of patients had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL at Week 12. COBI appeared to be well tolerated with no discontinuations due to adverse events.[25]

Frequency of Administration

In February 2013, the FDA approved the use of once-daily DRV for treatment-naive children and for treatment-experienced children without DRV resistance–associated mutations (see Table B below). Population PK modeling and simulation were used to develop recommendations for once-daily dosing in younger pediatric subjects aged 3 years to <12 years and weighing 10 kg to <40 kg.[10,26] Currently, limited data exist on the efficacy of once-daily DRV/r dosing in treatment-naive or treatment-experienced children aged <6 years. Therefore, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) generally recommends dosing DRV/r twice daily in children aged ≥3 years to <12 years (see Once-Daily Administration in Children Aged <12 Years and Weighing <40 kg below). The Panel recommends that once-daily DRV/r be used only in treatment-naive and treatment-experienced adolescents weighing ≥40 kg who do not have mutations that are associated with DRV resistance. If DRV and RTV are used once daily in children aged <12 years, the Panel recommends conducting a PK evaluation of plasma concentrations of DRV and closely monitoring viral load.

Table B. U.S. Food and Drug Administration–Approved Once-Daily Dosing for Pediatric Patients Aged ≥3 Years and Weighing >20 kg Who Are Treatment Naive or Treatment Experienced With No Darunavir Resistance–Associated Mutations

Note: The Panel generally recommends dosing DRV plus RTV *twice daily* in children aged ≥3 to <12 years.

Weight	Dose (Once Daily with Food)
DRV/r	
20 kg to <30 kg	DRV 600 mg (tablet, combination of tablets, or 6 mL) plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)[a]
30 kg to <40 kg	DRV 675 mg (combination of tablets or 6.8 mL)[b,c] plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)[a]
≥40 kg	DRV 800 mg (tablet, combination of tablets, or 8 mL)[c] plus RTV 100 mg (tablet or powder)[a]

[a] RTV oral solution is no longer available. Use of DRV/r is now limited to children weighing ≥20 kg who can receive 100 mg RTV using powder or tablets.

[b] DRV 100 mg/mL oral suspension; the 675-mg once daily DRV dose is rounded for dosing convenience of suspension.

[c] The 6.8-mL and 8-mL DRV doses can be taken as two administrations (3.4 mL and 4 mL, respectively) once daily by refilling the oral dosing syringe supplied by the manufacturer or as one administration once daily if a larger syringe is provided by a pharmacy or provider.

Key: DRV = darunavir; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir; RTV = ritonavir

Once-Daily Administration in Children Aged <12 Years and Weighing <40 kg

During the TMC114-C228 trial, the researchers investigated once-daily dosing of DRV for 2 weeks; DRV PK were evaluated in treatment-experienced children aged 3 years to <12 years as part of a substudy. After the conclusion of the substudy, the participants switched back to a twice-daily

regimen.[21,26] The DRV/r dose for once-daily use, which was based on PK simulation and did not include a relative bioavailability factor, was DRV 40 mg/kg coadministered with approximately 7 mg/kg of RTV for children weighing <15 kg and DRV/r 600 mg/100 mg once daily for children weighing ≥15 kg.[26,27] The PK data obtained from 10 children aged 3 to 6 years in this substudy (see Table C below) were included as part of the population PK modeling and simulation that was used to determine the FDA-approved dose for once-daily DRV/r in children aged 3 years to <12 years.

In a small study in which DRV/r was administered once daily to 12 treatment-experienced children aged 6 to 12 years,[12] the geometric mean $AUC_{0–24h}$ achieved was below the study target of 80% of the value seen in adults (63.1 mg·h/L vs. 71.8 mg·h/L). Trough values exceeded the plasma concentration that is recommended for treatment-experienced patients (0.55 mg/L). Despite the FDA dosing guidelines, the Panel generally recommends dosing DRV/r twice daily in children aged ≥3 to <12 years. The Panel makes this recommendation because of the small data set used for once-daily DRV/r PK modeling and the limited amount of data on the use of once-daily DRV/r in children aged <12 years.

Table C. Pharmacokinetics of Once-Daily Darunavir in Children Aged 3 to 6 Years After 2 Weeks of Therapy With Ritonavir and Optimized Background Therapy

PK Parameter	Children Aged 3 to 6 Years (n = **10**)[a]	Adults (n = 335)
DRV $AUC_{0–24h}$ geometric mean, ng·h/mL (SD)	115 (40.6)	89.7 (27.0)
DRV C_{0h} geometric mean, ng/mL (SD)	3,029 (1,715)	2,027 (1,168)

[a] Source: Kakuda TN, Brochot A, van de Casteele T, et al. Establishing darunavir dosing recommendations in treatment-naive and treatment-experienced pediatric patients. Presented at: 14th Clinical Pharmacology Workshop on HIV; 2013. Amsterdam, Netherlands. Available at: https://www.natap.org/2013/Pharm/Pharm_19.htm.

Key: $AUC_{0–24h}$ = 24-hour area under the curve; C_{0h} = predose concentration; DRV = darunavir; PK = pharmacokinetic; SD = standard deviation

Once-Daily Administration in Adolescents Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥40 kg

A substudy of once-daily dosing of DRV/r 800 mg/100 mg demonstrated that DRV exposures in 12 treatment-naive adolescents (aged 12–17 years and weighing ≥40 kg) were similar to those seen in adults treated with once-daily DRV (see Table D below).[13] After 48 weeks, 83.3% of patients had viral loads <50 copies/mL and 91.7% had viral loads <400 copies/mL.[13] Interestingly, no relationship was observed between DRV $AUC_{0–24h}$ and C_{0h} and virologic outcome (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) in this study. DRV exposures were found to be similar to those observed in adults with once-daily dosing in another study in which a single dose of DRV/r 800 mg/100 mg was administered to 24 subjects with a median age of 19.5 years (range 14–23 years).[28] However, DRV exposures were slightly below the lower target concentrations in adolescent patients aged 14 to 17 years (n = 7) within the cohort, suggesting that higher doses may be needed in younger adolescents. A single case report involving a highly treatment-experienced adolescent patient suggests that using an increased DRV dose with standard RTV boosting and employing TDM can lead to virologic suppression.

Table D. Darunavir Pharmacokinetics With Once-Daily Administration in Adolescents Aged ≥12 Years and Adults Aged >18 Years

Population	n	Dose of DRV/r	$AUC_{0–24h}$[a] (mcg•h/L) Median	C_{0h} (ng/mL) Median
Adolescents Aged **12–17** Years (Mean Age 14.6 years)[b]	12	800 mg/100 mg	86.7	2,141
Adolescents and Adults Aged **14**–23 Years (Mean Age 19.5 years)[c]	24	800 mg/100 mg	69.5	1,300
Adults Aged **>18** Years (Two Studies)[a]	335/280	800 mg/100 mg	87.8–87.9	1,896–2,041

[a] Source: Darunavir [package insert]. Food and Drug Administration. 2020. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2021/021976Orig1s063lbl.pdf.

[b] Source: Kakuda TN, Brochot A, van de Casteele T, et al. Establishing darunavir dosing recommendations in treatment-naive and treatment-experienced pediatric patients. Presented at: 14th Clinical Pharmacology Workshop on HIV; 2013. Amsterdam, Netherlands. Available at: https://www.natap.org/2013/Pharm/Pharm_19.htm.

[c] Source: Flynn P, Blanche S, Giaquinto C, et al. DIONE – 24-week efficacy, safety, tolerability and pharmacokinetics of darunavir/ritonavir once daily in treatment-naive adolescents aged 12 to < 18 years. Abstract # PP_2. Presented at: 3rd International Workshop on HIV Pediatrics; 2011. Rome, Italy. Available at: https://www.natap.org/2011/IAS/IAS_40.htm.

Key: $AUC_{0–24h}$ = 24-hour area under the curve; C_{0h} = predose concentration; DRV/r = darunavir/ritonavir

The efficacy of once-daily DRV has been established within a limited number of studies in small cohorts of adolescents that reported long-term data on virologic and immunologic outcomes.[13,29]

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Lopinavir/Ritonavir (LPV/r, Kaletra)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Oral Solution

- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 80 mg/mL and ritonavir 20 mg/mL (contains 42.4% alcohol by volume and 15.3% propylene glycol by weight/volume)

Film-Coated Tablets

- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 100 mg/ritonavir 25 mg
- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 200 mg/ritonavir 50 mg

Generic Formulations

- Lopinavir 80 mg/mL and ritonavir 20 mg/mL oral solution (contains 42.4% alcohol by volume and 15.3% propylene glycol by weight/volume)
- Lopinavir 100 mg/ritonavir 25 mg oral tablet
- Lopinavir 200 mg/ritonavir 50 mg oral tablet

When using fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablets, refer to other sections of the Drug Appendix for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate (Aged <14 Days) Dose

- Lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in neonates before a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks and a postnatal age of at least 14 days.

Dosing for Individuals Who Are Not Receiving Concomitant Nevirapine (NVP) or Efavirenz (EFV)

Infant (Aged 14 Days to 12 Months) Dose

- Once-daily dosing is not recommended.
- LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily. This approximates LPV/r 16 mg/4 mg (both per kg body weight) twice daily. Use of this dose in infants aged <12 months is associated with lower lopinavir (LPV) trough levels than those found in adults; LPV dosing should be adjusted for growth at frequent intervals (see Pharmacokinetics and Dosing below).

Selected Adverse Events

- Gastrointestinal (GI) intolerance, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, alteration of taste
- Hyperlipidemia, especially hypertriglyceridemia
- Elevated transaminases
- Hyperglycemia
- PR interval prolongation
- QT interval prolongation and Torsades de Pointes
- Risk of toxicity—including life-threatening cardiotoxicity—is increased in premature infants (see Major Toxicities below).

Child and Adolescent (Aged >12 Months to ≤18 Years) Dose

- Once-daily dosing **is not recommended.**
- LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily (maximum dose LPV/r 400 mg/100 mg twice daily, except as noted below). For patients weighing <15 kg, this dose approximates LPV/r 13 mg/3.25 mg (both per kg body weight) twice daily. For patients weighing ≥15 kg to 45 kg, this dose approximates LPV/r 11 mg/2.75 mg (both per kg body weight) twice daily. This dose is routinely used by many clinicians and is the preferred dose for antiretroviral therapy–experienced patients who could harbor virus with decreased LPV susceptibility (see Pharmacokinetics and Dosing below).
- LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily can be used in antiretroviral (ARV)-naive patients aged >12 months. For patients weighing <15 kg, this dose approximates LPV/r 12 mg/3 mg per kg body weight given twice daily. For patients weighing ≥15 kg to 40 kg, this dose approximates LPV/r 10 mg/2.5 mg per kg body weight given twice daily. This lower dose **should not be used** in treatment-experienced patients who could harbor virus with decreased LPV susceptibility.
- See the table below for weight-band dosing when using tablets.

Adult (Aged ≥18 Years) Dose

- LPV/r 800 mg/200 mg once daily; *or*
- LPV/r 400 mg/100 mg twice daily
- **Do not use** once-daily dosing in patients receiving concomitant therapy with NVP or EFV, or patients with three or more LPV-associated mutations (see Special Instructions for a list of mutations).

Dosing for Individuals Receiving Concomitant NVP or EFV

- These drugs induce LPV metabolism and reduce LPV plasma levels. Increased LPV/r dosing is required with concomitant administration of these drugs. Once-daily dosing **should not be used** in these patients.

Infant (Aged 14 Days to 12 Months) Dose

- Once-daily dosing **is not recommended.**
- LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily. This approximates LPV/r 16 mg/4 mg (both per kg body weight) twice daily. Use of this dose in infants aged <12 months is associated with lower lopinavir (LPV) trough levels than those found in adults; LPV dosing should be adjusted for growth at frequent intervals (see Pharmacokinetics and Dosing below).

Special Instructions

- LPV/r tablets can be administered without regard to food; administration with or after meals may enhance GI tolerability.
- LPV/r tablets must be swallowed whole. **Do not crush or split tablets.**
- LPV/r oral solution should be administered with food because a high-fat meal increases absorption.
- The poor palatability of LPV/r oral solution is difficult to mask with flavorings or foods (see Formulations below).
- LPV/r oral solution can be kept at room temperature (up to 77ºF or 25ºC) if used within 2 months. If kept refrigerated (36ºF to 46ºF or 2ºC to 8ºC), LPV/r oral solution remains stable until the expiration date printed on the label.
- Children aged <18 years who receive once-daily dosing of LPV/r have shown considerable variability in plasma concentrations and have a higher incidence of diarrhea. Therefore, once-daily dosing **is not recommended** for this age group.
- **Do not use** once-daily dosing in patients receiving concomitant therapy with NVP or EFV.
- Use of LPV/r once daily is **contraindicated** if three or more of the following LPV resistance–associated substitutions are present: L10F/I/R/V, K20M/N/R, L24I, L33F, M36I, I47V, G48V, I54L/T/V, V82A/C/F/S/T, and I84V. This is because higher LPV trough concentrations may be required to suppress resistant virus.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 substrate and inhibitor. LPV/r **is contraindicated** with (1) drugs that are highly dependent on CYP3A4 for clearance and for which elevated plasma concentrations are associated with serious and/or life-threatening reactions; and (2) drugs that are potent CYP3A inducers for which significantly reduced LPV plasma concentrations may be associated with the potential for loss of virologic response and possible resistance and cross-resistance.

Child and Adolescent (Aged >12 Months to ≤18 Years) Dose

- Once-daily dosing is not recommended.
- LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily. See the table below for weight-band dosing when using tablets.

Adult (Aged ≥18 Years) Dose

- The FDA-approved dose is LPV/r 500 mg/125 mg twice daily, given as a combination of two tablets of LPV/r 200 mg/50 mg and one tablet of LPV/r 100 mg/25 mg. Alternatively, three tablets of LPV/r 200 mg/50 mg can be used for ease of dosing.
- Once-daily dosing should not be used.

LPV/r Used in Combination With Maraviroc (MVC)

- MVC doses may need modification (see the HIV Drug Interaction Checker) and the Maraviroc section.

Weight-Band Dosing for LPV/r 100-mg/25-mg Pediatric Tablets in Children and Adolescents

Recommended Number of LPV/r 100-mg/25-mg Tablets Given Twice Daily		
Dosing target	300 mg/m^2 per dose given twice daily	230 mg/m^2 per dose given twice daily
Body Weight		
15 kg to 20 kg	2	2
>20 kg to 25 kg	3	2
>25 kg to 30 kg	3	3
>30 kg to 35 kg	4[a]	3
>35 kg to 45 kg	4[a]	4[a]
>45 kg	4[a] or 5[b]	4[a]

[a] Two tablets that each contain LPV/r 200 mg/50 mg can be substituted for the four LPV/r 100-mg/25-mg tablets in children who are capable of swallowing a larger tablet.

[b] In patients who weigh >45 kg and who are receiving concomitant NVP or EFV, the FDA-approved adult dose is LPV/r 500 mg/125 mg twice daily, given as a combination of two tablets of LPV/r 200 mg/50 mg and one tablet of LPV/r 100 mg/25 mg. Alternatively, three tablets of LPV/r 200 mg/50 mg can be used for ease of dosing.

- LPV/r is eliminated primarily by hepatic metabolism. Use caution when administering LPV to patients with hepatic impairment, because LPV concentrations may be increased. No dosing information is currently available for children or adults with hepatic insufficiency.
- In the coformulation of LPV/r, ritonavir (RTV) acts as a pharmacokinetic enhancer, not as an ARV agent. RTV inhibits the metabolism of LPV and increases LPV plasma concentrations.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 substrate and inhibitor with the potential for multiple drug interactions. Coadministering LPV/r with drugs that induce CYP3A4 may decrease lopinavir (LPV) plasma concentrations, whereas coadministering LPV/r with other CYP3A4 inhibitors may increase LPV plasma concentrations. Coadministering LPV/r with other CYP3A4 substrates may require dose adjustments and additional monitoring.

Before initiating therapy with LPV/r, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions. In patients treated with LPV/r, fluticasone (a commonly used inhaled and intranasal steroid) should be avoided, and an alternative steroid should be used. Fluticasone is a CYP3A substrate and LPV/r significantly increases fluticasone exposures, potentially resulting in adverse systemic corticosteroid effects including Cushing's syndrome and adrenal suppression.[1] Drug interactions with antituberculous drugs are common. Coadministration of LPV/r with the antituberculosis drug rifampin—a strong CYP3A4 inducer—may lead to suboptimal LPV levels.[2-4] Patients who are receiving both LPV/r and antituberculous drugs may need a dose adjustment for LPV/r, or they may need to switch to an antiretroviral (ARV) regimen that does not include LPV/r.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, headache, asthenia, nausea and vomiting, rash, insulin resistance,[5] and hyperlipidemia, especially hypercholesterolemia and hypertriglyceridemia,[6-8] which may be more pronounced in girls than in boys.[9] LPV requires a higher dose of ritonavir than some other protease inhibitors (PIs); this higher dose may exacerbate these adverse events.
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, hemolytic anemia, spontaneous and/or increased bleeding in hemophiliacs, pancreatitis, elevation in serum transaminases, hepatitis (which has been life-threatening in rare cases), PR interval prolongation, QT interval prolongation, and Torsades de Pointes may occur.[10]

Special Populations: Neonates

- An increased risk of toxicity in premature infants has been reported, including cases of transient symptomatic adrenal insufficiency,[11,12] life-threatening bradyarrhythmias and cardiac dysfunction (including complete atrioventricular block, bradycardia, and cardiomyopathy),[13-15] lactic acidosis, acute renal failure, central nervous system depression, and respiratory depression. Transient asymptomatic elevation in 17-hydroxyprogesterone levels also has been reported[11] in term newborns treated at birth with LPV/r. These toxicities may be caused by the drug itself and/or by the inactive ingredients in the oral solution,[15] which include propylene glycol (15.3%) and ethanol (42.4%).
- Since these cases have been reported, the pharmacokinetics (PK) and safety of LPV/r have been studied in neonates in two clinical trials. In IMPAACT P1106, a Phase 4 prospective study evaluating the safety and PK of ARV medications in low and normal birthweight infants <3 months old, one group received LPV/r as standard of care.[16] A total of 28 neonates with HIV were enrolled, with a median birth weight of 2,288 g (interquartile range [IQR] 1,360–3,320 g) and a median gestational age of 36 weeks (IQR 27–39 weeks). All infants started LPV/r at

≥13 days postnatal age and 34 weeks postmenstrual age. In 25 infants with available PK data, the median LPV dose was 418 mg/m^2 twice daily (23.6 mg/kg). The median trough LPV level was 5.14 (IQR 2.95–8.51) µg/mL, above the minimal effective target concentration of 1 µg/mL. Nearly half of infants initiated therapy prior to 42 weeks postmenstrual age with no observed safety or PK differences compared with infants who initiated LPV/r at or after 42 weeks postmenstrual age. No adverse events Grade 3 or higher were considered related to LPV/r treatment. The authors concluded that oral LPV/r solution is safe and effective in preterm infants at ≥13 days postnatal age and ≥34 weeks postmenstrual age.[16] The PETITE study evaluated the PK and safety of LPV/r oral granules in term neonates exposed to HIV in South Africa.[17] No adverse events of Grade 2 or higher related to study drugs occurred among 16 infants exposed to LPV/r granules. The authors also concluded that administration of LPV/r granules to term neonates beginning at birth was safe and well tolerated.[17] It should be noted that the use of LPV/r oral granules avoids exposure to the excipients present in the oral solution (propylene glycol and ethanol), which may reduce the risk of neonatal toxicity; however, the LPV/r granule formulation is not readily available in the United States.

- Although these recent studies provide some reassurance about the safety of LPV/r in neonates, they enrolled small numbers of participants, and further studies are needed of LPV/r in this age group. The potential benefit of using LPV/r in infants who are <42 weeks postmenstrual age or <14 days postnatal age must be carefully balanced against the risk of potentially life-threatening metabolic and cardiac toxicity.

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

LPV/r is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children, including neonates who have attained a postmenstrual age of 42 weeks and a postnatal age of at least 14 days. The potential benefit of using LPV/r in infants who have not met these age thresholds must be carefully balanced with the risk of metabolic and cardiac toxicity. In addition, in pediatric patients receiving LPV/r at a dose of 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 twice daily, lower LPV exposure has been observed in infants aged <6 weeks relative to older children.[18]

Efficacy

Clinical trials involving antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive adults have shown that regimens that contain LPV/r plus two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors are comparable to a variety of other regimens, including regimens that contain atazanavir, darunavir, or efavirenz (EFV).[19-23]

LPV/r has been studied in both ART-naive and ART-experienced children and has demonstrated durable virologic activity and acceptable toxicity.[24-33]

Pharmacokinetics

General Considerations

Children have lower LPV/r exposure than adults when treated with doses that are directly scaled for body surface area. The directly scaled dose approximation of the adult dose in children is calculated by dividing the adult dose by the typical adult body surface area of 1.73 m^2. For the adult dose of LPV/r 400 mg/100 mg, the scaled pediatric dose would be approximately LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area. However, younger children have higher LPV clearance and need higher doses to achieve LPV exposures that are similar to those seen in adults treated with standard doses. To achieve a trough concentration (C_{trough}) similar to that observed in adults, the pediatric dose needs to be increased 30% greater than the dose that is directly scaled for body surface area. LPV exposures in infants[18,26,31] are compared to those in older children[24] and adults[34] in Table A below.

Table A. Pharmacokinetics of Lopinavir/Ritonavir by Age

PK Parameters	Adults (n = 19)[34]	Children (n = 12)[24]	Children (n = 15)[24]	Infants[a] at 12 Months (n = 20)[31]	Infants at 6 Weeks to 6 Months (n = 18)[26]	Infants at 14 Days to <6 Weeks (n = 9)[18]
LPV Dose	400 mg	230 mg/m^2	300 mg/m^2	300 mg/m^2	300 mg/m^2	300 mg/m^2
$AUC_{0–12h}$ (mcg·hr/mL)	92.6	72.6	116.0	101.0	74.5	43.4
C_{max} (mcg/mL)	9.8	8.2	12.5	12.1	9.4	5.2
C_{trough} (mcg/mL)	7.1	4.7	7.9	4.9	2.7	2.5
C_{min} (mcg/mL)	5.5	3.4	6.5	3.8	2.0	1.4

[a] This column contains unreported data that were originally generated for a published study. The data were provided by Edmund Capparelli, Pharm.D., in a personal communication (April 18, 2012).

Note: Values are means, and PK parameters refer to the LPV component; all data come from studies wherein none of the participants received non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors as part of their antiretroviral therapy.

Key: $AUC_{0–12h}$ = area under the curve from time zero to 12 hours after drug administration; C_{max} = maximum plasma concentration; C_{min} = minimum plasma concentration; C_{trough} = trough concentration; LPV = lopinavir; PK = pharmacokinetic

Models suggest that diet, body weight, and postnatal age are important factors in LPV PK, with higher bioavailability as dietary fat increases during the first year of life[35] and clearance slowing by age 2.3 years.[36] A study from the United Kingdom and Ireland compared outcomes of LPV/r treatment with either 230 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose or 300 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose in children aged 5.6 to 12.8 years at the time of LPV/r initiation. The findings suggested that the higher dose was associated with improved long-term viral load suppression.[37]

Pharmacokinetics and Dosing

14 Days to 12 Months (Without Concurrent Nevirapine or Efavirenz)

The PK of the oral solution at approximately LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily were evaluated in infants aged <6 weeks[18] and infants aged 6 weeks to 6 months.[26] Even at this higher dose, C_{trough} levels were highly variable, but they were lower in infants than in children aged >6 months. C_{trough} levels were lower in infants aged ≤6 weeks than in infants aged 6 weeks to 6 months. By age 12 months, LPV area under the curve (AUC) was similar to that found in older children.[31] Because infants grow rapidly in the first months of life, it is important to optimize LPV dosing by adjusting the dose at frequent intervals. Given the safety of doses as high as 400 mg per m^2 of body surface area in older children and adolescents,[27] some practitioners anticipate rapid infant growth and prescribe doses somewhat higher than the 300 mg per m^2 of body surface area dose to allow for projected growth between clinic appointments.

12 Months to 12 Years (Without Concurrent Nevirapine or Efavirenz)

Lower C_{trough} values have been observed in children receiving LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily than in children receiving LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily (see Table A above).[23] Therefore, some clinicians choose to initiate therapy in children aged 12 months to 12 years using LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily (when LPV/r is given without nevirapine [NVP] or EFV), rather than the FDA-approved dose of LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily.

For infants receiving LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily, immediate dose reduction at age 12 months **is not recommended;** many practitioners would allow patients to "grow into" the dose of LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily as they gain weight over time. Some practitioners would continue the infant dose (LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily) while using the LPV/r liquid formulation.

Pharmacokinetics and Dosing With Concurrent Nevirapine or Efavirenz

In both children and adults, the LPV C_{trough} is reduced by concurrent treatment with non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs). Higher doses of LPV are recommended when the drug is given in combination with NVP or EFV. In 14 children who were treated with LPV/r 230 mg/57.5 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily plus NVP,[24] the mean LPV C_{trough} was 3.77 ± 3.57 mcg/mL. Not only are these trough plasma concentrations lower than those found in adults treated with standard doses of LPV/r, but the variability in concentration is much higher in children than in adults.[24,38] In a study of 15 children with HIV aged 5.7 to 16.3 years who were treated with LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily plus EFV 14 mg/kg body weight per dose once daily, there was a 34-fold interindividual variation in LPV C_{trough} values. Five of 15 children (33%) had LPV 12-hour C_{trough} values that were <1.0 mcg/mL, the plasma concentration needed to inhibit wild-type HIV.[39] A PK study in 20 children aged 10 to 16 years who were treated with LPV/r 300 mg/75 mg per m^2 of body surface area twice daily plus EFV 350 mg per m^2 of body surface area once daily reported only one patient (6.6%) with subtherapeutic LPV C_{trough} values,[40] perhaps because the trial used an EFV dose that was approximately 11 mg/kg body weight[40] instead of the 14 mg/kg body weight dose used in the trial discussed above.[39]

Dosing

Once Daily

A single daily dose of LPV/r 800 mg/200 mg is approved by the FDA for treatment of HIV in treatment-naive adults aged >18 years. However, **once-daily administration cannot be recommended for use in children in the absence of therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM);** once-daily administration may be successful in select, closely monitored children.[41] There is high interindividual variability in drug exposure for LPV/r, and trough plasma concentrations may fall below the therapeutic range for wild-type virus, as demonstrated in studies of ARV-naive children and adolescents.[42-45] The currently available tablet formulation of LPV/r has lower variability in trough levels than the previously used soft-gel formulation.[45,46] An international, randomized, open-label trial attempted to demonstrate that once-daily LPV/r dosing was non-inferior to twice-daily LPV/r dosing in children and adolescents with HIV. This trial was unsuccessful, because a greater number of children and adolescents who received once-daily doses had viral loads ≥50 copies/mL within 48 weeks.[47]

Dosing and Its Relation to Efficacy

LPV/r is effective in treatment-experienced patients with severe immune suppression,[48,49] although heavily pretreated patients may be slower to reach undetectable viral loads[49,50] and may have less robust CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count percentage responses.[51]

The relationship between LPV exposure and the susceptibility of the HIV-1 isolate is a key component of successful treatment. The ratio of C_{trough} to half maximal effective concentration (EC_{50}) is called the inhibitory quotient (IQ), and in both adults and children treated with LPV/r, viral load reduction is more closely associated with IQ than with either C_{trough} or EC_{50} alone.[52-54] One study investigated the use of the IQ as a guide for therapy by administering higher doses of LPV/r to children and adolescents until a target IQ of 15 was reached. This study showed that doses of LPV/r 400 mg/100 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily (without NVP or EFV) and LPV/r 480 mg/120 mg per m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily (with NVP or EFV) were safe and tolerable.[27] Results of a modeling study suggest that standard doses of LPV/r may be inadequate for treatment-experienced children and indicate the potential utility of TDM when LPV/r is used in children who were previously treated with PIs.[55] An LPV plasma concentration of ≥1 mcg/mL is cited as a minimum target C_{trough},[56-58] but this C_{trough} may not adequately control viremia in patients with multiple LPV resistance mutations.[59,60]

Formulations

Palatability

The poor palatability of the LPV/r oral solution can be a significant challenge to medication adherence for some children and families. Numbing the taste buds with ice chips before or after administering the solution, masking the taste of the solution by administering it with sweet or tangy foods (e.g., chocolate syrup, peanut butter), or having the pharmacist flavor the solution prior to dispensing it are examples of interventions that may improve tolerability. Alternative pediatric formulations of LPV/r, including oral pellets and oral granules, are tentatively approved by the FDA, but are largely used in resource-limited settings and are not readily available in the United States.[17,34,61-64]

Do Not Use Crushed Tablets

LPV/r tablets must be swallowed whole. Crushed tablets are slowly and erratically absorbed and result in significantly reduced AUC, maximum concentration , and C_{trough} compared with swallowing the whole tablet. The variability of the reduced exposure with the crushed tablets (5% to 75% reduction in AUC) means that a dose modification cannot be relied on to overcome the reduced absorption. **Crushed tablets cannot be recommended for use.**[65] In a PK study that used a generic adult formulation of LPV/r manufactured in Thailand, 21 of 54 children were administered cut (not crushed) pills and had adequate LPV C_{trough} measurements.[46]

Toxicity

Children treated with LPV/r may have less robust weight gain and smaller increases in CD4 percentage than children treated with NNRTI-based regimens.[29,66-70] However, one study did not observe this difference in the effect of LPV/r on CD4 count,[71] and another study found that the difference did not persist after a year of therapy.[32] Some studies found no differences between the weight gain of children treated with LPV/r and those treated with EFV.[69,72] Switching to an EFV-based regimen at or after age 3 years removed the risk of LPV-associated metabolic toxicity, with no loss of virologic control (see Table 16 in Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy).[69,70] Bone mineral density improved when children were treated with EFV-containing regimens instead of regimens that contained LPV/r.[73] Among 212 children randomized to either remain on an LPV/r-based regimen or switch to an EFV-containing regimen, osteocalcin—a biochemical marker of bone turnover—was higher in the LPV/r group than the EFV group at both 8 weeks and 2 years post-randomization. Levels of C-telopeptide of type 1 collagen and procollagen type I N-terminal propeptide did not differ between the two groups.[74] In a separate study, among 220 children with HIV (mean age 6.38 years), lower bone mass was observed in children on LPV/r-based regimens than those with EFV-based regimens over 2 years of follow-up.[75]

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Entry and Fusion Inhibitors

Fostemsavir (FTR, Rukobia)

Ibalizumab (IBA, Trogarzo)

Maraviroc (MVC, Selzentry)

Fostemsavir (FTR, Rukobia)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Formulations</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Extended-Release Tablet: 600 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Dosing Recommendations</th><th>Selected Adverse Events</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Child and Adolescent (Aged <18 Years) Dose

• The safety and efficacy of using fostemsavir (FTR) in children and adolescents aged <18 years have not been established.

Adult Dose

• One tablet twice daily</td><td>• QTc (QT corrected for heart rate) interval prolongation with higher-than-recommended dosages

• Increased hepatic transaminases in children with hepatitis B or hepatitis C coinfection</td></tr>
<tr><th>Special Instructions</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Can be taken with or without food

• Extended-release tablet must be swallowed whole. Do not chew, crush, or split tablets.

• Should not be coadministered with strong cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 inducers of metabolism, such as rifampin, carbamazepine, phenytoin, and phenobarbital

• Potential for multiple drug interactions. Check concomitant medications before prescribing FTR.

• Tablets have a slight odor similar to vinegar.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Metabolism/Elimination</th></tr>
<tr><td>• FTR tromethamine is a prodrug of temsavir (TMR), an HIV-1 glycoprotein 120–directed attachment inhibitor.

• FTR is rapidly converted to TMR after oral administration. Metabolic pathways of TMR include hydrolysis (esterases) (36.1% of oral dose), oxidation (CYP3A4) (21.1% of oral dose), and uridine diphosphate glucotransferase (<1% of oral dose).

• TMR is a substrate of CYP3A, esterases, P-glycoprotein, and breast cancer resistance protein (BCRP).

• TMR is an inhibitor of organic anion transporter OATP1B1 and OATP1B3; TMR and two of its metabolites are inhibitors of BCRP.

FTR Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment

• No dose adjustment is required in children with mild-to-severe hepatic impairment.

FTR Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment

• No dose adjustment is required in children with renal impairment or those on hemodialysis.</td></tr>
</table>

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism*: Coadministration with strong cytochrome P450 3A inducers is contraindicated, because the plasma concentrations of the active metabolite, temsavir (TMR), are significantly reduced, which could result in loss of virologic efficacy.
- *Cardiac toxicity:* Caution is required when used in combination with drugs that are associated with prolongation of the QT corrected for heart rate (QTc) interval of the echocardiogram.
- *Oral contraceptives and gender-affirming hormonal therapy*: TMR may increase ethinyl estradiol concentrations and risk of thrombosis. Do not exceed 30 mcg ethinyl estradiol daily when fostemsavir is co-administered with estrogen-based therapies. For gender-affirming hormonal therapy, estrogen concentrations can be monitored with dose adjustments as needed.[1]
- *3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl coenzyme A (or HMG-CoA) reductase inhibitors (statins):* TMR may increase plasma concentrations of statins, including rosuvastatin, atorvastatin, fluvastatin, pitavastatin, and simvastatin. Use the lowest possible starting dose of statin and monitor for statin-associated adverse effects.
- *Hepatitis C virus direct-acting antivirals:* TMR may increase plasma concentrations of grazoprevir and voxilaprevir due to organic anion transporting polypeptide OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 inhibition.
- *Other antiretroviral (ARV) agents*: Drug interaction studies of fostemsavir (FTR) in combination with darunavir/cobicistat, darunavir/ritonavir, etravirine, and maraviroc have been conducted in healthy volunteers. FTR given in combination with these other ARVs was generally well tolerated, and no dose adjustments were required.[2,3]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, fatigue, diarrhea (reported in ≥5% of people)
- *Less common*: QTc prolongation with higher-than-recommended doses[4]
- *Less common:* Increased hepatic transaminases in people with hepatitis B or hepatitis C coinfection

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

TMR showed reduced antiviral activity against HIV subtype AE (the predominant subtype found in Southeast Asia but not commonly found elsewhere in the world). Treatment-emergent glycoprotein 120 (gp120) genotypic substitutions at four key sites—S375, M434, M426, and M475—have been found in evaluable participants with virologic failure in clinical trials. However, overall frequency of polymorphisms previously associated with the potential to reduce susceptibility to TMR is low and should not be a barrier to its usage in people with multidrug resistance.[5] At this time, standard HIV drug resistance testing does not include FTR.

Pediatric Use

FTR is an HIV-1 gp120-directed attachment inhibitor that is not approved for use in children. FTR was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2020 for use in adults in combination with other ARV drugs, with approval limited to heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug-resistant HIV who are experiencing virologic failure on their current regimen due to resistance, intolerance, or safety considerations.[6] A pharmacokinetic, safety, acceptability, and swallowability study of FTR in children and adolescents weighing ≥20 kg is open to enrollment (PENTA Foundation: NCT04648280). The dose selection of FTR for children and adolescents weighing ≥20 kg utilized a population pharmacokinetic model–based approach to achieve similar adult TMR exposures following FTR 600 mg twice daily dosing that was demonstrated to be safe and effective in the BRIGHTE study in heavily treatment-experienced children and adolescents.[7]

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

The safety and efficacy of FTR in heavily treatment-experienced adults with HIV were evaluated in the BRIGHTE trial, a Phase 3, double-blind placebo-controlled trial. A total of 371 participants were enrolled into two cohorts (randomized and nonrandomized), depending on remaining treatment options. The randomized cohort included 272 participants, with at least one fully active drug in at least one but no more than two ARV classes that could be added to FTR. Participants received either FTR or a placebo twice daily for 8 days, in addition to their failing ARV regimen. On Day 8, participants treated with FTR had a significantly greater decrease in levels of HIV-RNA than those taking the placebo (0.79 vs. 0.17 $\log_{10}$ copies, respectively).[8] After Day 8, all participants received FTR as part of an optimized regimen. In results reported through 48 weeks,[8] 54% of participants had an HIV viral load of <40 copies/mL. At Week 96, 60% of participants[6,9] had HIV viral loads of <40 copies/mL and a mean increase in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts of 205 cells/mm^3. In 51% (27 out of 53) of evaluable participants with virologic failure, treatment-emergent gp120 genotypic substitutions were detected at four key sites—S375, M434, M426, and M475. In the randomized cohort, virologic response rates increased over time, between the 24-week and 96-week analyses. Response rates were associated with better susceptibility scores for new optimized treatment regimens.[10] Participants with the lowest CD4 counts at baseline were more likely to experience serious adverse events or death.[10] Improvements in patient-reported outcomes in health-related quality of life were observed among participants in both cohorts of the BRIGHTE trial at 48 weeks.[11]

An additional nonrandomized cohort of 99 adults who had no active drugs as treatment options but had FTR added to an optimized ARV regimen was studied. Of these, 38% achieved an HIV viral load of <40 copies/mL at 48 weeks.[8] For this cohort, at 96 weeks,[6] 37% of participants had HIV viral loads of <40 copies/mL, and the mean increase in CD4 counts was 119 cells/mm^3.

Recently, long-term efficacy and safety of FTR plus optimized therapy at 240 weeks has been reported for participants enrolled in the Phase 3 BRIGHTE study. Durable virologic responses were observed with no new safety concerns.[12,13]

The real-world OPERA prospective cohort study, using a large database of electronic medical records, was conducted in the United States in 182 heavily treatment-experienced adults who initiated therapy with FTR and were followed for up to 1 year.[14] Most participants virologically suppressed at FTR initiation were able to maintain suppression regardless of CD4 count at start. Only 52% of participants viremic at initiation with CD4 counts ≥350 cells/mm^3 achieved viral suppression,

and only 33% of those with CD4 counts <350 cells/ mm^3 achieved viral suppression.[14] Immunologic responses were variable, but improvements were seen in CD4 counts (increase of 66 cells/ mm^3) among participants who were virologically suppressed with low CD4 counts at initiation.[14]

Mechanism of Action

FTR tromethamine is a prodrug of TMR, an HIV-1 gp120-directed attachment inhibitor. FTR is rapidly converted to TMR after oral administration. TMR binds directly to the HIV-1 gp120 and prevents viral attachment and subsequent entry of virus into host T cells. FTR has a novel mechanism of action and no *in vitro* cross-resistance with other ARVs, and it can be used regardless of HIV-1 tropism.[5]

Pharmacokinetics

FTR is pre-systemically metabolized to the active moiety TMR by alkaline phosphatase in the luminal surface of the small intestine, and then TMR is rapidly absorbed. In healthy adults, the estimated half-life is approximately 11 hours.[15,16]

FTR has a novel mechanism of action, lacks significant drug–drug interactions with other ARVs, and does not require dosage adjustment in people with renal or hepatic impairment.[16] The PENTA study "Safety and Pharmacokinetics Evaluation of Fostemsavir + (OBT) in HIV-1 Infected Children and Adolescents Who Are Failing Their CART and Have Dual- or Triple-Class Antiretroviral Resistance" is currently recruiting participants.

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Ibalizumab (IBA, Trogarzo)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Single-Dose Vial for Intravenous (IV) Administration: 200 mg/1.33 mL (150 mg/mL) in a single-dose vial. Each single-dose vial contains the following inactive ingredients: L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium chloride, and sucrose.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Child and Adolescent Dose

- The safety and efficacy of using ibalizumab (IBA) in children and adolescents has not been established.

Adult Dose (Diluted IV Infusion or Undiluted IV Push)

- A single loading dose IV infusion of IBA, 2,000 mg of diluted solution, is administered IV over 30 minutes.
- Alternatively, a single loading dose of undiluted IBA 2,000 mg is administered IV by IV push over 90 seconds.
- The maintenance dose of IBA is 800 mg given every 2 weeks. The maintenance dose can be given as 800 mg of diluted solution administered IV over 15 minutes or as 800 mg of undiluted solution given by IV push over 30 seconds.
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of IBA is limited to heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug-resistant HIV infection who are experiencing treatment failure on their current regimen.
- IBA is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs.

Selected Adverse Events

- Diarrhea, dizziness, nausea, rash
- Immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome
- In studies of cynomolgus macaque monkeys, IBA use during pregnancy was associated with reversible immunosuppression (CD4 T and B cell lymphopenia) in offspring with IBA exposure *in utero*. Whether this association exists for offspring of a human birthing parent treated with IBA during pregnancy is unknown.

Special Instructions

- For administration by IV infusion, the appropriate number of vials must be diluted in 250 mL of 0.9% sodium chloride injection.
- For administration of diluted solution, using aseptic technique, withdraw 1.33 mL from each vial and transfer into a 250-mL bag of 0.9% sodium chloride for IV injection. Other IV diluents must not be used.
- Once diluted, the solution should be administered immediately. If not used immediately, the solution can be stored at room temperature for up to 4 hours or refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Refrigerated solution should be allowed to stand at room temperature for at least 30 minutes but no more than 4 hours prior to administration.
- Diluted solution is administered as an IV infusion, not as a bolus or IV push.
- Undiluted solution may be given by IV push over 90 seconds to administer the loading dose and over 30 seconds to administer the maintenance dose.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Monoclonal antibodies are metabolized to peptides and amino acids.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Ibalizumab (IBA) is a humanized immunoglobulin G4 monoclonal antibody that blocks HIV entry into CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cells. Based on IBA's mechanism of action and target-mediated drug disposition, drug–drug interactions are not expected. However, no drug interaction studies have been conducted.[1]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Rash, diarrhea, headache, nausea, dizziness, depression[1,2]
- *Less common (more severe):* Immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome, hypersensitivity reaction[1]

Resistance

HIV has shown reduced susceptibility to IBA, as defined by a decrease in maximum percent inhibition, when HIV loses N-linked glycosylation sites in the V5 loop of glycoprotein 120.[1-3]

Phenotypic and genotypic test results showed no evidence of cross-resistance between IBA and any U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved classes of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.[4] IBA exhibits ARV activity against R5-tropic, X4-tropic, and dual-tropic HIV.[4]

Pediatric Use

Approval

IBA is not approved by the FDA for use in pediatric patients. IBA was approved by the FDA in 2018 for use in adults in combination with other ARV drugs, with approval limited to heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug-resistant HIV who are experiencing treatment failure on their current regimen.[5] IBA has an orphan drug designation exempting the requirement for pediatric studies under the Pediatric Research Equity Act. The FDA requested that the company (i.e., Theratechnologies) create a registry to collect prospective data in individuals exposed to IBA during pregnancy to monitor maternal and pregnancy outcomes, including adverse effects on the developing fetus, neonate, and infant. Health care providers are encouraged to report these adverse events to Theratechnologies by calling 1-833-23-THERA (1-833-23-4372).

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

A TaiMed Biologics trial, TMB-301, was conducted in 40 adults aged 23 to 65 years who had body weights ranging from 50 kg to 130 kg, had resistance to ARV drugs from three classes, had been treated for at least 6 months on stable ARV regimens, had viral loads >1,000 copies/mL, and had viral sensitivity to at least one ARV drug.[3,5] Participants continued their current ARV regimens and received a 2,000-mg loading dose of IBA on Day 7 of the study. One week after the loading dose, participants optimized their ARV regimens. Participants received IBA 800 mg on Day 21 and every 2 weeks thereafter. At Week 25, 43% of participants achieved suppressed viral loads[1,3] of <50 copies/mL. At Week 48 of an open-label extension study, 24 participants were taking IBA and their optimized ARV regimen. Sixteen of 27 participants (59%) had viral loads <50 copies/mL at 48 weeks.[6,7]

Mechanism of Action

IBA is a recombinant humanized monoclonal antibody that blocks HIV from infecting CD4 cells. It does this by binding to domain 2 of the CD4 receptor, which interferes with the post-attachment steps that allow HIV virus particles to enter host cells and prevent the viral transmission that occurs via cell–cell fusion.[1,7] IBA does not interfere with CD4-mediated immune functions because it binds to a conformational epitope located primarily in domain 2 of the extracellular portion of the CD4 receptor, away from major histocompatibility complex II molecule binding sites.

Embryo-Fetal Toxicity

In an enhanced prenatal and postnatal development study, pregnant cynomolgus monkeys were administered intravenous doses of IBA, and significant changes in infant monkey immune cell levels were found (CD4 T cell and B cell lymphocytopenia) that were attributed to *in utero* IBA exposure.[1] The lymphocyte changes correlated with infant monkey IBA serum concentrations and appeared to return to near-normal levels when IBA concentrations were nearly undetectable. One treatment-group infant monkey died from a systemic viral infection with secondary superficial bacterial infection that was acquired during the postnatal period. Despite the low incidence of death (1 of 20 infant monkeys), the death may be related to IBA-induced immunosuppression.[1]

Based on these animal data, IBA may cause reversible immunosuppression (CD4 T cell and B cell lymphocytopenia) in infants born to human birthing parents who were treated with IBA during pregnancy. Immune phenotyping of the peripheral blood and expert consultation are recommended to provide guidance regarding monitoring and management of exposed infants based on the degree of immunosuppression observed. Furthermore, the safety of administering live or live-attenuated vaccines to infants with *in utero* IBA exposure and abnormal lymphocyte levels is unknown.

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Maraviroc (MVC, Selzentry)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Oral Solution: 20 mg/mL

Tablets: 150 mg, 300 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

- Maraviroc (MVC) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use, in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) agents, for the treatment of CCR5-tropic HIV-1 infection in infants born full term and weighing ≥2 kg, children, adolescents, and adults.

Recommended MVC Dose for Full-Term Infants and Treatment-Experienced Children and Adolescents Weighing ≥2 kg: Tablets or Oral Solution

Weight Band	Twice-Daily Dosing	Oral Solution (20 mg/mL)	Tablets
Recommended doses when MVC is given with noninteracting drugs, such as nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs), nevirapine (NVP), dolutegravir (DTG), and raltegravir (RAL)			
2 kg to <4 kg	30 mg	1.5 mL	N/A
4 kg to <6 kg	40 mg	2 mL	N/A
6 kg to <10 kg	100 mg	5 mL	N/A
10 kg to <14 kg	150 mg	7.5 mL	One 150-mg tablet
14 kg to <30 kg	200 mg	10 mL	N/A
≥30 kg	300 mg	15 mL	One 300-mg tablet

Selected Adverse Events

- Nausea, vomiting
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea
- Cough
- Upper respiratory tract infections
- Fever
- Rash
- Hepatotoxicity (which may be preceded by severe rash and/or other signs of systemic allergic reaction)
- Postural hypotension (generally seen in patients with severe renal insufficiency)
- Dizziness

Special Instructions

- MVC is recommended for use in patients who have only CCR5-tropic HIV-1. Before using MVC, conduct testing with an HIV tropism assay (see Drug-Resistance Testing in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines) to exclude the presence of CXCR4-tropic or mixed/dual-tropic HIV. Do not use MVC if CXCR4-tropic or mixed/dual-tropic HIV is present.
- Measure alanine aminotransferase, aspartate aminotransferase, and bilirubin prior to initiation of MVC and as clinically indicated while receiving MVC. Additional monitoring may be necessary for individuals with hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus coinfection or preexisting liver dysfunction.
- MVC can be given without regard to food.

Recommended doses when MVC is given with potent cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A inhibitors (with or without a potent CYP3A inducer), including all protease inhibitors (PIs)			
2 kg to <10 kg	Not recommended. Data are insufficient to make dosing recommendations for infants weighing <10 kg and receiving a potent CYP3A inhibitor.		
10 kg to <20 kg	50 mg	2.5 mL	N/A
20 kg to <30 kg	75 mg	4 mL	N/A
30 kg to <40 kg	100 mg	5 mL	N/A
≥40 kg	150 mg	7.5 mL	One 150-mg tablet
Recommended doses when MVC is given with potent CYP3A inducers (without a potent CYP3A inhibitor), including efavirenz (EFV) and etravirine (ETR)			
Infants and children and adolescents in all weight bands	Not recommended. Data are insufficient to make dosing recommendations.		

Recommended MVC Dose for Adults: Tablets

When Coadministered With	Dose
Noninteracting concomitant medications, including NRTIs, NVP, DTG, and RAL	300 mg twice daily
Potent CYP3A inhibitors (with or without a potent CYP3A inducer), including all PIs	150 mg twice daily
Potent CYP3A inducers (without a potent CYP3A inhibitor), including EFV and ETR	600 mg twice daily

- Instruct patients on how to recognize symptoms of allergic reactions or hepatitis.
- Use caution when administering MVC to patients with underlying cardiac disease.

Metabolism/Elimination

- MVC is a substrate of CYP3A4. If a patient is receiving ARV agents or other medications that act as CYP3A inducers or inhibitors, the dose of MVC should be adjusted accordingly.

MVC Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- Use caution when administering MVC to patients with hepatic impairment; MVC concentrations may be increased in these patients.

MVC Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- No data recommend specific doses of MVC for pediatric patients with mild or moderate renal impairment. MVC is contraindicated for pediatric patients with severe renal impairment or end-stage renal disease (creatinine clearance <30 mL/min or who are receiving regular hemodialysis) and who are concomitantly receiving potent CYP3A inhibitors or inducers.
- Refer to the manufacturer's prescribing information for the appropriate doses to use in adolescent and adult patients with renal impairment (See Appendix B in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Absorption:* Absorption of maraviroc (MVC) is slightly reduced with ingestion of a high-fat meal. Food restrictions were not part of either the adult trials (which used the tablet formulation) or the pediatric trial (which used both the tablet and oral solution formulations) that demonstrated the efficacy, antiviral activity, and safety of MVC. Therefore, MVC can be given with or without food.

- *Metabolism:* MVC is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A and P-glycoprotein (P-gp) substrate and requires dose adjustments when administered with medications that modulate CYP3A or P-gp. A patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions before MVC is administered; recommended MVC doses are based on concomitant medications and their anticipated effect on MVC metabolism. Particular attention should be paid to antimycobacterial and antiseizure agents, which may substantially decrease MVC levels (See Drug-Drug Interactions in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines). Concomitant use of MVC and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) **is not recommended** because it may result in suboptimal levels of MVC.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Cough, fever, upper respiratory tract infections, rash, musculoskeletal symptoms, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and headache. Dizziness or postural hypotension occurred in 12.2% of adults but only 3.2% of children when MVC was administered twice daily.
- *Less common (more severe):* Hepatotoxicity has been reported; some cases were preceded by evidence of a systemic allergic reaction (including pruritic rash, eosinophilia, or elevated levels of immunoglobulin E). Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis, and drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (or DRESS) have been reported. Serious adverse events (AEs) occurred in <2% of MVC-treated adult patients and included cardiovascular abnormalities (e.g., angina, heart failure, myocardial infarction), hepatic cirrhosis or failure, cholestatic jaundice, viral meningitis, pneumonia, myositis, osteonecrosis, and rhabdomyolysis.

Mechanism of Action

MVC is a CCR5 receptor antagonist that selectively binds to the human chemokine receptor CCR5 on the cell membrane, preventing interaction between HIV-1 glycoprotein 120 and CCR5-tropic HIV-1, inhibiting viral entry into the cell.

Resistance

An HIV tropism assay should be performed before MVC is administered, and MVC should only be used for patients with CCR5-tropic HIV. Clinical failure on MVC may represent the outgrowth of preexisting, undetected CXCR4-tropic (naturally resistant) HIV variants. In addition, HIV-1 variants have been identified with amino acid substitutions that confer reduced susceptibility to MVC despite remaining CCR5-tropic. However, clinically available genotypic resistance testing typically does not report susceptibility to MVC.

In circumstances when MVC is needed for presumptive HIV therapy for full-term neonates at high risk of perinatal HIV transmission, initiation of MVC should not be deferred until tropism assay results are available; consultation with an HIV expert is recommended.

Pediatric Use

Approval

MVC is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treatment of CCR5-tropic HIV virus, when used in conjunction with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, in full-term infants weighing ≥2 kg, children, adolescents, and adults.[1,2]

Pharmacokinetics and Efficacy

The International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) 2007 study evaluated the pharmacokinetics (PK) and safety of MVC added to a 6-week prophylactic ARV regimen to prevent perinatal HIV transmission among infants born to mothers with HIV.[2] Analyses were stratified by exposure to efavirenz (EFV), either *in utero* or through breastmilk, versus non-EFV exposure. The MVC exposure target was average plasma concentration (C_{avg}) ≥75 ng/mL, as determined by adult treatment studies. MVC oral solution was dosed at 8 mg/kg twice daily for the first 6 weeks of life. Among 25 infants with evaluable PK data, 12 of whom were EFV-exposed, 67% of the EFV-exposed infants achieved a C_{avg} ≥75 ng/mL at Week 1, whereas 77% of the EFV-unexposed infants had a C_{avg} ≥75 ng/mL. At Week 4, the proportion of infants achieving a C_{avg} ≥75 ng/mL declined to 42% among EFV-exposed infants and 31% among EFV-unexposed infants. No infants in the study met safety endpoints or discontinued MVC during the study, and no infants acquired HIV. A population PK model, which included assessment of age and maturational changes, was developed from IMPAACT 2007 data to describe MVC disposition within the first 6 weeks of life.[3] Simulations with FDA-approved weight-band dosing resulted in the majority of simulated patients (84.3%) achieving an average concentration of ≥75 ng/mL. The FDA recommendation for MVC dosing among children >6 weeks of life but younger than 2 years of age is based on modeling using PK data from the IMPAACT 2007 study. When considering the use of MVC for neonates and infants, a pediatric HIV specialist should be consulted.

PK, safety, and efficacy of MVC for treatment-experienced children ages 2 years to <18 years and weighing ≥10 kg, and who had plasma HIV RNA >1,000 copies/mL were examined in an international dose-finding and efficacy study (NCT00791700). Of the 103 children who participated in the study, all of whom had CCR5-tropic HIV, 51% had HIV-1 subtype C, 25% had subtype B, and 23% had other subtypes. In this trial, the MVC dose was based on body surface area and the composition of the patient's optimized background therapy. Most participants (87%) received MVC in combination with potent CYP3A inhibitors; 10 participants received MVC with noninteracting medications; and only 3 participants received MVC with CYP3A inducers (without CYP3A inhibitors). The key pharmacologic target (geometric mean C_{avg} >100 ng/mL) was achieved with both the tablet and oral solution formulation of MVC in 98% of the 50 participants who entered the safety and efficacy stage of the study.[4] Only two participants discontinued the study due to AEs. The most common MVC-related AEs through 48 weeks were diarrhea (20.3% of participants), vomiting (19.8% of participants), and upper respiratory infections (16.2% of participants). At Week 48, 48% of participants had HIV RNA <48 copies/mL. From a mean baseline plasma HIV RNA concentration of 4.4 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL, a decrease of ≥1.5 $\log_{10}$ occurred in all four age-based cohorts.[4] However, this study was not designed to evaluate efficacy, and most treatment failures were suspected to be related to adherence challenges.

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Capsid Inhibitors

Lenacapavir (LEN, Sunlenca)

Lenacapavir (LEN, Sunlenca)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: 300 mg

Single-Use Vial for Subcutaneous (SQ) Injection: 463.5 mg/1.5 mL suspension

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Child and Adolescent Dose

- The safety and efficacy of using lenacapavir (LEN) in children and adolescents has not been established.

Adult Dose

- Approved for use in heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug resistant HIV-1 infection who are experiencing virologic failure on their current antiretroviral (ARV) regimen due to resistance, intolerance, or safety considerations. LEN is used in combination with an optimized background regimen.
- Approved for use as HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of sexually acquired HIV-1 in adults and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg who are at risk for HIV-1 acquisition. Individuals must have a negative HIV-1 test prior to initiating. See Initiation Option 1 below.

Initiation Option 1

- Day 1: 927 mg by SQ injection (two 1.5-mL SQ injections in the abdomen) and 600 mg orally (two 300-mg tablets)
- Day 2: 600 mg orally (two 300-mg tablets)

Initiation Option 2

- Day 1: 600 mg orally (two 300-mg tablets)
- Day 2: 600 mg orally (two 300-mg tablets)
- Day 8: 300 mg orally (one 300-mg tablet)
- Day 15: 927 mg by SQ injection (two 1.5 mL SQ injections in the abdomen)

Maintenance

- 927 mg by SQ injection (two 1.5 mL SQ injections in the abdomen) every 26 weeks +/- 2 weeks from date of last injection

Selected Adverse Events

- Injection site reaction
- Nausea
- Headache

Special Instructions

- If LEN is discontinued, initiate an alternative, fully suppressive ARV regimen ≤28 weeks after the final injection of LEN to avoid virologic resistance.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Minor metabolism by cytochrome P450 3A4 and uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1.
- Major route of elimination is unchanged drug in feces.

Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- No dosage adjustments were recommended for adults with mild (Child-Pugh-Turcotte Class A: score 5–6) or moderate (Child-Pugh-Turcotte Class B: score 7–9) hepatic impairment.

Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- Creatinine clearance (CrCl) ≥15 mL/minute: No dosage adjustment is required.
- CrCl <15 mL/minute: No dosage adjustments are provided in the manufacturer's prescribing information (i.e., not studied).[1]
- Dialysis: No dosage adjustments are required. Not expected to be significantly removed by dialysis due to high protein binding. There is one published case report of a patient with estimated glomerular filtration rate 4 mL/min on hemodialysis who received LEN, fostemsavir, and lamivudine, with resultant viral suppression sustained over 1 year.[2]

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Concomitant administration of lenacapavir (LEN) (a moderate cytochrome P450 [CYP] 3A inhibitor) with moderate or strong CYP3A inducers may significantly decrease LEN plasma concentrations, which may result in the loss of therapeutic effect and development of resistance to LEN. Concomitant administration with strong inducers is contraindicated and with moderate inducers **is not recommended.**
- Combined P-glycoprotein, uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1, and strong CYP3A inhibitors may significantly increase plasma concentrations of LEN. Concomitant administration of LEN with these inhibitors **is not recommended.**
- LEN is a moderate inhibitor of CYP3A. Due to the long half-life of LEN following subcutaneous (SQ) administration, LEN may increase the exposure of drugs primarily metabolized by CYP3A.
- Drug interactions may occur up to 9 months after the last SQ dose of LEN.

Major Toxicities

- *More common (incidence >10%):* Injection site reactions (62% to 65%)—including pain (19% to 31%), swelling (23% to 36%), erythema (25% to 31%), induration (15%), or the development of a nodule (14% to 25%)—were reported. Most injection site reactions resolve within days; however, nodules may persist for long periods of time consistent with their depot formulation.[3-5] Nausea (12% to 14%), headache (8% to 13%),[4,5] constipation (11% to 13%),[3,4] and diarrhea (8% to 14%)[3-5] have been reported. No Grade 3 or 4 laboratory abnormalities were deemed clinically significant; the most frequent was abnormal creatinine clearance (CrCl) (13%). Low levels of CrCl or estimated glomerular filtration rate or high creatinine levels were transient or unconfirmed abnormalities.[4]
- *Less common (more severe):* Immune reconstitution syndrome has been reported in patients treated with combination antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Resistance

Resistance to LEN was noted in 8 of 72 patients in the CAPELLA trial (mainly in those with M66I mutations). Resistance largely occurred early in the trial, and half of these patients had low adherence to their optimized background therapy as indicated by plasma drug concentrations.[4] After 26 weeks, only one patient developed LEN resistance.[3]

The reported prevalence of LEN-resistance mutations is low (0.14%) among drug-naive individuals.[6]

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV Drug Resistance Mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

LEN is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in pediatric patients. LEN was approved by the FDA in 2022 in combination with other antiretroviral(s) (ARVs) and is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in heavily treatment-experienced adults with multidrug resistant HIV-1 infection who are experiencing virologic failure on their current ARV regimen due to resistance, intolerance, or safety considerations. LEN is given alongside two other fully active agents in the treatment of HIV if at least one agent has a high barrier to resistance; otherwise, three fully active agents are recommended in addition to LEN.[7]

There are limited data on the efficacy and safety of LEN in people with HIV who are initiating ART.

LEN is in Phase 3 development for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in adults and adolescents and received FDA approval as PrEP on June 18, 2025. The Phase 3 PURPOSE-1 study of LEN as PrEP in female adolescents aged ≥16 years and women showed 100% efficacy of LEN, with no cases of HIV among 2,134 women and adolescent girls receiving LEN, as compared to 16 incident cases of HIV in 1,068 women receiving tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine (TDF/FTC) PrEP (incidence 0 and 1.69 per 100 person-years, respectively; $P < 0.001$).[8] On the basis of this data, the Data Monitoring Committee recommended that the blinded phase of the trial be stopped at the interim analysis and LEN be offered to all participants. Published results of the Phase 3 PURPOSE-2 study of LEN as PrEP in men and individuals with other self-expressions who have sex with men are not yet available, but the study has released results in the form of a press release.[9] PURPOSE-2 found 2 cases of incident HIV (0.10 per 100 person-years; n = 2,180) in the group that received LEN and 9 cases of incident HIV in the group that received TDF/FTC (0.93 per 100 person-years; n = 1,087), with 96% relative risk reduction as compared to the estimated baseline HIV incidence of 2.37 per 100 person-years (incidence rate ratio 0.04; $P < 0.001$).

It is unknown if LEN is excreted in breast milk.[10] There were 193 pregnancies that occurred in the 184 participants of the PURPOSE-1 trial who received LEN; 88 of them were ongoing at the time of the interim analysis preceding publication. Of the 105 completed pregnancies, there were 55 (28.5%) births (including 52 live births and 3 stillbirths) and 50 (25.9%) interrupted pregnancies, consisting of 30 (15.5%) induced abortions and 20 (10.4%) spontaneous abortions occurring prior to 20 weeks gestation. An infant born to a woman receiving LEN had polydactyly, which was considered unrelated to the study drug in the context of a strong family history of this anomaly.

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics in Clinical Trials

Clinical Trials in Adults

A randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind, multicenter trial (CAPELLA) evaluated LEN in combination with an optimized background ART regimen in 72 patients with multidrug resistant HIV-1.[4] Because CAPELLA was a clinical trial, the optimized background ART regimen did not include experimental agents. CAPELLA enrolled participants 23 to 78 years of age (enrollment criteria included those ≥12 years of age) who were experiencing virologic failure on their current regimen and with documented resistance to at least two ARV medications from at least three of the four main classes (nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, non–nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, protease inhibitors, and integrase strand transfer inhibitors) and to no more than two fully

active ARV drugs from the four main classes that could be effectively combined. Patients were enrolled in two cohorts according to change in plasma HIV-1 RNA level between the screening and cohort-selection visits. In cohort 1, patients were first randomly assigned in a 2:1 ratio to receive oral LEN or placebo in addition to their failing therapy for 14 days. During the maintenance period, starting on Day 15, patients in the LEN group received SQ LEN once every 6 months, and those in the placebo group received oral LEN, followed by SQ LEN. Both groups also received optimized background therapy. In cohort 2, all the patients received open-label oral LEN with optimized background therapy on Days 1 through 14, and then SQ LEN was administered once every 6 months starting on Day 15. The primary endpoint was defined by the percentage of patients in the first cohort who had a decrease of at least 0.5 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL viral load from baseline to Day 15. The secondary endpoint was a viral load of <50 copies/mL at Week 26. The results showed that 21 of 24 (88%) patients in the LEN group met the primary endpoint, as compared to 2 of 12 (17%) patients in the placebo group ($P < 0.001$); 81% of patients met the secondary endpoint.[11] None of the patients developed serious adverse events that were considered related to LEN. At 52-week follow-up in CAPELLA, nine participants had emergent LEN resistance, four of whom resuppressed to <50 copies/mL. A high rate of virological suppression was achieved in this treatment-experienced cohort, with 83% (95% confidence interval [CI], 67% to 94%) achieving suppression to <50 copies/mL and 86% (95% CI, 71% to 95%) achieving suppression to <200 copies/mL.[3] LEN added to an optimized background regimen led to high efficacy in highly treatment-experienced participants with multidrug resistance but could select for resistance when used unintentionally as functional monotherapy (e.g., when patients have poor adherence to a self-administered optimized background regimen).[11]

CALIBRATE is a Phase 2, ongoing, randomized, open-label trial that enrolled 183 treatment-naive patients with HIV ≥18 years of age to evaluate the efficacy of LEN in various combinations versus bictegravir (BIC)/tenofovir alafenamide/emtricitabine combination pill. At Week 54, virologic suppression was greater for the BIC-containing combination pill group (92%) compared to various combinations with LEN (85% to 90%). This ongoing study will follow participants through 80 weeks of therapy.[5]

Observational or Effectiveness Data

One case series[12] reported on the salvage strategy of the use of LEN as part of a hybrid long-acting ART regimen in adults with viremia and resistance to one or more components of long-acting ART. This series included one patient with perinatally acquired HIV and a large viral reservoir who achieved viral suppression on the combination of LEN and cabotegravir/rilpivirine (CAB/RPV). A cohort from Ward 86 in San Francisco reported on the use of LEN concurrently with CAB/RPV in an adult with sluggish viral load decline on CAB/RPV.[13]

The elimination half-life of LEN is about 10 to 12 days (oral formulation) and 8 to 12 weeks (SQ formulation). Residual concentrations of LEN long-acting injection may remain in the systemic circulation of patients for ≥12 months. To minimize the potential risk of resistance development, an alternative, fully suppressive ARV regimen should be initiated no later than 28 weeks after the final LEN injection when possible.

Hepatic and Renal Impairment

Two Phase 1 single-dose studies have assessed LEN pharmacokinetics (PK) in the setting of hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh-Turcotte Class B) or renal impairment (with CrCl <15 mL/min). Ten

participants with impaired hepatic or renal function and 10 participants with normal hepatic and renal function were given a single oral dose of LEN 300 mg and PK measured thereafter. Compared to participants with normal hepatic function, people with hepatic impairment had LEN areas under the concentration-time curve extrapolated to infinity (AUC_{inf}) and maximum plasma concentrations (C_{max}) 1.47-fold and 2.61-fold higher, respectively. For participants with renal impairment, LEN AUC_{inf} and C_{max} were 1.84-fold and 2.62-fold[1] higher, respectively, compared to those with normal renal function. These exposure changes were not considered clinically significant, and no LEN dosing adjustments were recommended for people with mild (Child-Pugh-Turcotte Class A: score 5–6) or moderate (Child-Pugh-Turcotte Class B: score 7–9) hepatic impairment or for people with mild ($60 \leq CrCl \leq 89$ mL/min), moderate ($30 \leq CrCl \leq 59$ mL/min), and severe (≤ 15 CrCl <30 mL/min) renal impairment.

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Integrase Inhibitors

Bictegravir (BIC)

Cabotegravir (CAB, Vocabria)

Dolutegravir (DTG, Tivicay)

Elvitegravir (EVG)

Raltegravir (RAL, Isentress)

Bictegravir (BIC)

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Formulations

Bictegravir is available only in a fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablet.

FDC Tablet

- [Biktarvy]
  - Bictegravir 50 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 25 mg
  - Bictegravir 30 mg/emtricitabine 120 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 15 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

[Biktarvy] Bictegravir (BIC)/Emtricitabine (FTC)/Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF)

Neonate or Child Aged <2 Years and Weighing <14 kg

- No data currently are available on the appropriate dose of Biktarvy in children aged <2 years and weighing <14 kg. Studies are being conducted to develop an age-appropriate formulation and identify the appropriate dose for this age and weight group.

Child (Aged ≥2 Years), Adolescent, and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with or without food

Body Weight	Dose
≥14 kg to <25 kg	BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg
≥25 kg	BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Biktarvy for use in people who have no antiretroviral treatment (ART) history; in people with an ART history who are not virologically suppressed, with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to the integrase strand transfer inhibitor class, emtricitabine, or tenofovir (TFV); or to replace the current antiretroviral (ARV) regimen in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to BIC or TFV. Some members on the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV also recommend the use of Biktarvy in children with prior treatment failure and who have virus containing the M184V mutation but no other known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Biktarvy (see the Efficacy in Clinical Trials in Adults section below).

Selected Adverse Events

- Diarrhea, nausea, headache

Special Instructions

- Administer Biktarvy with or without food. See the Drug Interactions section below for guidance when administering Biktarvy with antacids or iron or calcium supplements.
- For children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, the tablet can be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are swallowed within approximately 10 minutes. Dissolving tablets may be an alternative, but crushing tablets **is not recommended**.
- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FTC or TAF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV can occur when discontinuing FTC or TAF; therefore, monitor hepatic function for several months after halting therapy with FTC or TAF.

Metabolism/Elimination

- BIC is metabolized by cytochrome P450 3A4 and uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1.

	Biktarvy Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment • Biktarvy **is not recommended** for use in children with severe hepatic impairment. Biktarvy Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment • Biktarvy **is not recommended** for use in children with estimated creatinine clearance <30 mL/min. See the Biktarvy product label for use in adults on dialysis.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Bictegravir (BIC) is a substrate of cytochrome P450 3A4 and uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase (UGT) 1A1. Tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) is a substrate of P-glycoprotein and UGT1A1. Coadministration of the fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablet bictegravir/emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide (BIC/FTC/TAF [Biktarvy]) and rifampin is **contraindicated.**[1,2]
- *Renal effects:* BIC is an inhibitor of organic cation transporter 2 and multidrug and toxin extrusion protein 1, so it decreases tubular secretion of creatinine. This increases serum creatinine and reduces estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) with no change in glomerular function. Drugs that decrease renal function could reduce clearance of emtricitabine (FTC).
- *Absorption:* Administering BIC concurrently with antacids lowers the plasma concentrations of BIC. This phenomenon occurs because of the formation of complexes in the gastrointestinal tract and not because of changes in gastric pH. Chelation by high concentrations of divalent cations, such as iron, decreases absorption of integrase strand transfer inhibitors (INSTIs), including elvitegravir and BIC. For this reason, Biktarvy should be administered at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after antacids and supplements or multivitamins that contain iron, calcium, aluminum, magnesium, and/or zinc[3] when Biktarvy is given on an empty stomach. Biktarvy and antacids or supplements that contain calcium or iron can be taken together with food.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, nausea, headache. In two clinical trials, total bilirubin increased by up to 2.5 times the upper limit of normal in 12% of adults who received Biktarvy. In general, however, bilirubin increase was mild and did not lead to drug discontinuations in these trials.[2] BIC may cause an increase in creatine kinase concentration. One participant out of 201 in a postmarketing observational study in adults experienced thrombocytopenia,[4] and 1 participant out of 100 in a prospective cohort study in children and adolescents experienced insomnia/anxiety[5] leading to drug discontinuation. Other neuropsychiatric and central nervous system manifestations have been reported in adults (see Table 17a. Antiretroviral Therapy–Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Central Nervous System Toxicity). Weight gain has been reported in adults who were receiving Biktarvy,[6,7] with an associated increased risk of cardiometabolic complications,[8] but preliminary pediatric data regarding weight

gain appear to be inconsistent.[9,10] In pediatric clinical trials, weight gain has been mild and may represent recovery toward healthy body weight[5] (see Table 17h. Antiretroviral Therapy-Associated Adverse Effects and Management Recommendations—Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain).

- *Less common (more severe):* Severe immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome may be more common with INSTIs than with other antiretroviral (ARV) agents. Drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms, or DRESS, syndrome has been reported in an adult starting a BIC-containing regimen.[11] Additionally, two cases of drug-induced liver injury—one leading to death—have been reported in adult women with HIV who were switched to a BIC-containing regimen.[12,13]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

BIC—available as part of the FDC tablet Biktarvy, which contains BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg—was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2018 for use in adults and in 2019 for use in children or adolescents weighing ≥25 kg. Biktarvy, containing BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg, was approved by the FDA in 2021 for use in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 to <25 kg. Biktarvy is FDA-approved for people who have no ARV treatment history; people with an antiretroviral therapy (ART) history who are not virologically suppressed, with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to the INSTI class, emtricitabine, or tenofovir (TFV); or to replace current ARV regimens in people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen with no known or suspected substitutions associated with resistance to BIC or TFV.[2] Some members of the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) also recommend the use of Biktarvy in children with prior treatment failure and who have virus containing the M184V mutation but no other known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Biktarvy (see the Efficacy in Clinical Trials in Adults section below).

Clinical Efficacy

In adults, a short-term Phase 1 study of BIC monotherapy at doses of BIC 50 mg or BIC 100 mg was well tolerated. Three out of eight participants in both of these dosing groups achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL within 11 days.[14] The efficacy (defined as viral load suppression to HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) and safety (as measured by the incidence of study drug discontinuation or death) of Biktarvy were similar to the efficacy and safety of comparator regimens in two Phase 3 randomized trials in adults who were treatment-naive. Viral load suppression occurred in 89% of participants who received coformulated BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg (n = 320) and in 93% of participants who received a regimen of dolutegravir (DTG) 50 mg plus FTC 200 mg plus TAF 25 mg (n = 325). Study drug discontinuation occurred in 1% of participants in both groups.

In a separate adult trial, viral load suppression occurred in 92% of participants who received BIC/FTC/TAF (n = 314) and in 93% of participants who received coformulated abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg (ABC/DTG/3TC) (n = 315). Study drug discontinuation was not reported for any of the participants who received BIC/FTC/TAF, although it did occur in 1% of participants who received ABC/DTG/3TC.[2,15] Studies that randomized virologically suppressed adults who were on stable ARV regimens to either continue their current regimens or switch to coformulated BIC/FTC/TAF have shown that BIC/FTC/TAF has similar safety and efficacy to existing regimens. Viral load suppression occurred in 94% of participants who were randomized to switch to BIC/FTC/TAF (n = 282) and in 95% of participants who continued taking ABC/DTG/3TC (n = 281). Study drug discontinuation was reported in 2% of participants who received BIC/FTC/TAF and 1% of participants who received ABC/DTG/3TC. Ninety-two percent of participants who were randomized to switch to BIC/FTC/TAF (n = 290) achieved viral load suppression, whereas 89% of participants who continued receiving atazanavir-based or darunavir-based combination ARV regimens (n = 287) achieved viral load suppression. Study drug discontinuation occurred in 1% of participants in both groups.[2] In an open-label extension following two randomized trials, 98.6% (426 of 432) (95% confidence interval [CI], 97.0% to 99.5%) of participants with available viral load data at Week 240 maintained HIV RNA <50 copies/mL; in an analysis counting missing viral loads as failures, 67.2% (426 of 634) (95% CI, 63.4% to 70.8%) met viral suppression criteria. No treatment-emergent resistance to BIC/FTC/TAF was detected, and adverse events led to drug discontinuation in 1.6% of participants.[6,16] BIC/FTC/TAF has a generally high genetic barrier to resistance, but emergence of nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) resistance–associated mutations has been described in people on BIC/FTC/TAF long-term with suboptimal adherence.[17,18] BIC/FTC/TAF has utility as a rapid ART initiation regimen in ART-naive people with HIV.[19] In observational cohorts of people with HIV, viral suppression was high and discontinuation was low when using BIC/FTC/TAF, both in ART-naive and ART-experienced individuals with and without previous detection of M184V.[20,21]

Similar BIC/FTC/TAF efficacy has been demonstrated in historically underrepresented populations, including Black and female populations with HIV.[22,23] In the ALLIANCE study of adults with HIV and hepatitis B coinfection, BIC/FTC/TAF was non-inferior to DTG/FTC/TDF for viral suppression of both HIV-1 and hepatitis B virus.[24]

Initial studies in adults switching to BIC/FTC/TAF from stable ART required undetectable viral load for 3 or 6 months and no proven or presumed pre-existing resistance to any of the components of BIC/FTC/TAF.[2,25,26] Further analysis of data from these studies used proviral genotyping and showed presence of M184V/I mutation in 54 (10%) of 543 BIC/FTC/TAF-treated participants. Presence of this mutation did not affect viral load suppression, with Week 48 HIV RNA <50 copies/mL in 52 (96%) of 54 participants with archived M184V/I mutations compared with Week 48 HIV RNA <50 copies/mL in 561 (98%) of 570 participants without the mutation.[27] A study to measure the effect of preexisting NRTI mutations on virologic outcome in participants switching from a stable regimen to BIC/FTC/TAF showed Week 48 HIV RNA <50 copies/mL in 223 (94%) of 237 participants without M184V/I resistance and in 42 (89%) of 47 participants with M184V/I mutations at baseline.[28,29] At Week 48, HIV RNA <50 copies/mL was maintained in 199 (93%) of 213 participants with no NRTI resistance mutation and in 66 (93%) of 71 participants with any NRTI resistance mutation, including K65R/E/N, any number of thymidine analogue mutations (M41L, D67N, K70R, L210W, T215F/Y, and K219Q/E/R/N), T69 insertions, T69D, K70E/G/M/Q/S/T, L74I/V, V75A/S/M/T, Y115F, Q151M, or M184V/I.[28] That study required pre-enrollment virologic suppression for 6 months in those with suspected NRTI resistance and 3 months for those without suspected NRTI resistance.[28] In an analysis of participant data pooled from six clinical trials

switching virologically suppressed adults with HIV to BIC/FTC/TAF, 98% (179 of 182) of participants with pre-existing M184V/I and 99% (2,012 of 2,034) of all participants (with or without M184V/I) had an HIV-1 RNA viral load <50 copies/mL at their last on-treatment visit, with no treatment-emergent resistance to BIC/FTC/TAF.[28,30-32] In a retrospective review at a single center in Spain involving 506 treatment-experienced adults with HIV who started BIC/FTC/TAF with a viral load <50 copies/mL, 69 (13.6%) had documented preexisting NRTI resistance mutations (11.2% M184V/I and 5.9% TFV mutations). In the intention-to-treat analysis, the proportion with a viral load <50 copies/mL was 88.4% (61/69) in those with NRTI resistance mutations versus 82.2% (359 of 437) in those without NRTI resistance mutations. In the per-protocol analysis, the proportions were 93.8% (61 of 65) in those with NRTI resistance mutations versus 94.4% (359 of 380) in those without NRTI mutations.[33] In another analysis from an HIV program in Canada using electronic health records from 50 adults with major NRTI resistance mutations prior to starting BIC/FTC/TAF, 49 had a viral load <100 copies/mL at a mean of 18.6 months after starting the regimen, with the remaining participant having questionable adherence.[34] In practice, Panel members have used BIC/FTC/TAF even in children with detectable viral load, prior ARV failure, or virus containing the M184V mutation but no other known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Biktarvy. This practice is based on the premise that the ability to simplify multi-pill or multi-dose regimens to a single small pill, once daily, can overcome potential resistance barriers with definite adherence benefits.[35]

In single-arm clinical trials of BIC/FTC/TAF in children and adolescents, viral suppression has been >90% at 24 and 48 weeks[5,36] (see Use of Biktarvy in Children and Adolescents below). In a retrospective, single-center study of 74 children and adolescents (median age 11.2 years; 93% ART-experienced, 85% previously exposed to INSTIs, 32% viremic at baseline) who received BIC/FTC/TAF for ≥6 months, 28 children (38%) experienced virologic failure.[18] Virologic failure was more frequent in children with viremia (68% with failure) than viral suppression (26% with failure) at baseline. Children with the M184V/I mutation at baseline were more likely to experience virologic failure (36% vs 12%), although poor adherence may be a common cause of pre-existing M184V/I and virologic failure. An NRTI resistance mutation emerged in one child with continuous detectable viremia for 47 months on ART; no treatment-emergent INSTI resistance was identified.

Pharmacokinetics

Pharmacokinetic (PK) studies of Biktarvy containing BIC 50 mg have been performed in adults, adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years who weigh ≥35 kg, and children aged 6 years to <12 years who weigh ≥25 kg. PK studies of "low-dose" Biktarvy, which contains BIC 30 mg, have been performed in children aged ≥2 years weighing 14 kg to <25 kg.[37] These studies show a higher BIC maximum serum concentration (C_{max}) in the younger cohorts than in the older cohorts, perhaps because the administered dose is higher on a mg/kg basis (see Table A below). The lower trough serum concentration (C_{tau}) and higher C_{max} in the younger age/lower body weight cohorts suggest more rapid clearance in children and adolescents than in adults. In the cohorts with body weight[37] ≥14 kg to <25 kg and body weight[5,36] ≥35 kg, there is a lower geometric mean ratio when C_{tau} is compared to adult values, and the lower 90% CI suggests that some children have quite rapid clearance (see Table B below). The mean C_{tau} were approximately 10 times the protein-adjusted 95% effective concentration for wild-type virus. Still, these PK observations raise the concern that some of the children in the youngest age/lowest body weight cohorts may experience suboptimal trough concentrations, which may lead to less "pharmacologic forgiveness" in people with lower adherence (see Table B below).[38]

Table A. Bictegravir Pharmacokinetics in Children, Adolescents, and Adults With HIV

PK Parameters	Children **Aged ≥**2 Years and Weighing **≥14** to <25 kg	Children Aged 6 Years to **<12** Years and Weighing ≥25 kg	Adolescents **Aged 12 Years to <18** Years and Weighing ≥35 kg	Adults
Dose (mg)	30	50	50	50
Dose for Lowest Weight in the Cohort (mg/kg)	2.14	2	1.43	1.25[a]
AUC_{tau} ng•h/mL Mean (CV%)	105,892	128,000 (28)	89,100 (31)	102,000 (27)
C_{max} ng/mL Mean (CV%)	9,857	9,460 (24)	6,240 (27)	6,150 (23)
C_{tau} ng/mL Mean (CV%)	1,605	2,360 (39)	1,780 (44)	2,610 (35)

[a] This dose was calculated using 40 kg as the lowest weight for adults.

Key: AUC_{tau} = area under the concentration time curve over the dosing interval; C_{max} = maximum serum concentration; C_{tau} = trough serum concentration at the end of the dosing interval; CV = coefficient of variation; PK = pharmacokinetic

Sources: Majeed S, German P, West SK, et al. B/F/TAF low-dose tablet relative bioavailability in HVs and PK in children with HIV. Abstract #841. Presented at: Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections. 2020. Boston, MA. Available at: https://www.natap.org/2020/CROI/croi_111.htm.

Gaur AH, Cotton MF, Rodriguez CA, et al. Fixed-dose combination bictegravir, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide in adolescents and children with HIV: week 48 results of a single-arm, open-label, multicentre, Phase 2/3 trial. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health.* 2021;5(9):642-651. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34302760.

Biktarvy (bictegravir/emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide) [package insert]. Food and Drug Administration. 2022. Available at: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2022/210251s015lbl.pdf.

Table B. Bictegravir Pharmacokinetics in Children and Adolescents With HIV

Cohort Characteristics	Dose (mg)	Dose for Lowest Weight in Cohort (mg/kg)	GMR% (90% CI) Compared to Adult Values[a]		
			AUC_{tau}	C_{max}	C_{tau}
Aged ≥2 Years and Weighing **≥14** to <25 kg[36,37]	30	2.14	108 (97–120)	165 (150–181)	65 (49–87)
Aged 6 Years to **<12** Years and Weighing ≥25 kg[5]	50	2	125 (117–134)	153 (143–163)	89 (81–98)
Aged 12 Years to **<18** Years and Weighing ≥35 kg[5]	50	1.43	86 (80–93)	100 (94–107)	65 (58–73)

[a] In this table, child and adolescent pharmacokinetic (PK) values are compared with the PK values of adults who received bictegravir 50 mg. The dose for the lowest weight in the adult cohort was 1.25 mg/kg; this was calculated using 40 kg as the lowest weight for adults.

Key: AUC_{tau} = area under the concentration time curve over the dosing interval; C_{max} = maximum serum concentration; C_{tau} = trough serum concentration at the end of the dosing interval; CI = confidence interval; GMR = geometric mean ratio

Use of Biktarvy in Children and Adolescents Weighing ≥25 kg

BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg (Biktarvy) was administered to adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years who weighed ≥35 kg (maximum body weight 56.1 kg) and who had maintained viral loads of <50 copies/mL for ≥6 months on their previous ARV regimens. The drug was well tolerated and was associated with a fall in eGFR similar to that seen in adults. This decrease in eGFR was considered to be from changes in tubular secretion of creatinine and was not a true change in glomerular function. In comparing cohorts of children (body weight ≥14 kg to <25 kg) and adolescents (body weight ≥35 kg) with adult cohorts, the geometric mean ratio of C_{tau} was noted to be lower (see Tables A and B above). All 50 participants in the study had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 24, and 49 of 50 had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 48.[5]

BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg was administered to children aged 6 years to <12 years who weighed ≥25 kg and who had had viral loads <50 copies/mL for ≥6 months on their current ARV regimens.[5] Despite a high area under the curve (AUC) and C_{max} (see Table A above), the drug combination was well tolerated, with a fall in eGFR similar to that seen in adult studies. One participant stopped the study drug because of insomnia and anxiety. The geometric mean ratio of C_{tau} compared with adult values (see Table B above) showed trough concentrations similar to those seen in adults.[5] All 50 participants in the study had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 24, and 49 of 50 had viral loads <50 copies/mL at Week 48.[5]

Use of Biktarvy in Children Weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg

Biktarvy tablets consisting of BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF15 mg were administered to children aged ≥2 years weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and who had viral loads <50 copies/mL on stable ART. PK evaluation showed high AUC and C_{max}, similar to those in children aged 6 years to <12 years who weighed ≥25 kg, a similarly low C_{tau} (see Table A above), and a lower geometric mean ratio when C_{tau} was compared with adult values (see Table B above).[36,37] In general, the low-dose tablet was well tolerated over 55 weeks in the 22 children studied.[36,39] Adverse events considered related to the study drug included transient neutropenia (n = 1); abdominal pain, constipation, and nausea (n = 1); and irritability, social avoidant behavior (onset Week 8 and resolved by Week 11), and increased weight (n = 1).[36,39] HIV RNA at <50 copies/mL was maintained in 20 (91%) of 22 participants at 24 weeks and 21 (95%) participants at 48 weeks, but no children had confirmed virologic failure.[36,39]

Dosing: Splitting, Dissolving, or Crushing Biktarvy Tablets

The product label states that for children who are unable to swallow a whole tablet, the tablet can be split and each part taken separately, as long as all parts are ingested within approximately 10 minutes.[2] Dissolving BIC/FTC/TAF tablets may be an alternative method of administration, but crushing tablets **is not recommended.**

In a Phase 1 open-label, single-dose, three-period crossover randomized trial of 18 adult participants without HIV, the bioavailability of Biktarvy (BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg) was evaluated in fasting participants who received Biktarvy dissolved in water, crushed in applesauce, or as a solid tablet. Dissolved tablet plasma concentration AUC was considered bioequivalent for all ARV components. Although the dissolved tablet C_{max} was considered bioequivalent for BIC and FTC, the TAF C_{max} 90% lower confidence limit was not (dissolved vs. solid ratio, 96% [90% CI, 74% to 124%]). For crushed tablets mixed with applesauce, the BIC component was considered bioequivalent for AUC and C_{max}. However, crushed FTC and TAF AUC and C_{max} were lower than

that of solid tablets, with FTC C_{max} (crushed vs. solid ratio, 70% [90% CI, 63% to 78%]), TAF AUC (84% [90% CI, 69% to 103%]), and TAF C_{max} (66% [90% CI, 51% to 85%]) failing to meet bioequivalence criteria. Crushing Biktarvy tablets may lead to suboptimal FTC and TAF exposures.[40]

In the clinical literature, case reports in adults with HIV receiving crushed BIC/FTC/TAF describe inconsistent virological and resistance outcomes.[31,41-44] These cases varied in underlying comorbidities, baseline viral loads, adherence, method of crushing and dissolving tablets, administration (i.e., orally vs. via a tube), and instructions about polyvalent cation and food administration.

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Cabotegravir

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Cabotegravir (CAB, Vocabria)
Cabotegravir for Intramuscular Injection (CAB, Apretude)
Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine for Intramuscular Injections (Long-Acting Injectable CAB and RPV, Cabenuva)

Formulations

Tablet

- [Vocabria] Cabotegravir: 30 mg

Single-Dose Vial for Intramuscular Injection

- [Apretude] Cabotegravir 600-mg/3-mL (200-mg/mL) suspension for intramuscular injection for use as HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis only

Co-packaged Formulations

- [Cabenuva Kit] Cabotegravir 400-mg/2-mL (200-mg/mL) and rilpivirine 600-mg/2-mL (300-mg/mL) suspension for intramuscular injection (each drug packaged in a separate syringe)
- [Cabenuva Kit] Cabotegravir 600-mg/3-mL (200-mg/mL) and rilpivirine 900-mg/3-mL (300-mg/mL) suspension for intramuscular injection (each drug packaged in a separate syringe)

When using the co-packaged formulation, refer to the Rilpivirine section for additional information.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

[Apretude] Cabotegravir (CAB) for Intramuscular Injection

- CAB 600 mg/3 mL for intramuscular (IM) injection is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in adults and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg; an oral dosing lead-in period of approximately 1 month is optional. See package insert for additional information about dosing and administration of CAB as PrEP; this indication is not addressed in the Pediatric Antiretroviral Guidelines.

[Cabenuva] CAB and Rilpivirine (RPV) for IM Injection (Long-Acting Injectable CAB and RPV)

Pediatric Dose

- CAB tablets and co-packaged long-acting injectable CAB and RPV (LA CAB/RPV) are not FDA approved for the treatment of HIV in children aged <12 years.

Selected Adverse Events

- Depression
- Insomnia
- Headache
- Rash (can be severe and include drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms) or hypersensitivity
- Hepatotoxicity
- Altered adrenocorticotropic hormone stimulation test of uncertain clinical significance
- Injection site reactions
- Creatine phosphokinase elevation following IM injection
- Weight gain

Child and Adolescent (Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- CAB and RPV is a two-drug co-packaged product for IM injection that is FDA approved as a complete regimen for the treatment of HIV-1 in people with HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL on a stable antiretroviral (ARV) regimen with no history of treatment failure and no known or suspected resistance to CAB or RPV.
- Oral lead-in dosing with CAB and RPV for at least 28 days can be used to assess tolerability prior to initiating LA CAB/RPV injections, or people can proceed directly to LA CAB/RPV on the last day of their current ARV regimen.
- Refer to the package insert for instructions about changing the frequency of IM injections, i.e., from monthly to every-2-month dosing or from every-2-month to monthly dosing.

Oral Lead-in Dosing

- CAB 30 mg orally and RPV 25 mg orally once daily with a meal for at least 28 days.

Dosing for Monthly Administration of LA CAB/RPV

- On the last day of oral lead-in therapy or the current oral ARV regimen, a loading dose of CAB 600 mg (3 mL) and RPV 900 mg (3 mL) should be given as two separate IM injections in separate ventrogluteal sites.
- Continuation therapy of CAB 400 mg (2 mL) and RPV 600 mg (2 mL) IM is given 1 month after the loading dose and once a month thereafter, with allowance for a ±7-day administration window.

Dosing for Every-2-Month Administration of LA CAB/RPV

- To initiate every-2-month dosing, CAB 600 mg (3 mL) and RPV 900 mg (3 mL) should be given as two separate IM injections in separate ventrogluteal sites on the last day of oral lead-in or the current oral ARV regimen and 1 month after the initial injections.
- After these two initiation injections 1 month apart for 2 months, continuation therapy with IM CAB 600 mg (3 mL) and RPV 900 mg (3 mL) is administered every 2 months, with allowance for a ±7-day administration window.

Children should be monitored for approximately 10 minutes for post-injection reactions. A 23-gauge, 1.5-inch IM needle is recommended for the injection and is provided in the packaging. Longer, 2-inch needles (not included with packaging) should be used in children with a body mass index >30 kg/m^2. The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV recommends that providers review instructions available with the package insert prior to beginning IM administration of LA CAB/RPV. Additional clinical resources, including injection education, are available from the manufacturer, ViiV.

Special Instructions

- Coadministering oral RPV with drugs that increase gastric pH may decrease plasma concentrations of RPV. Refer to the RPV package insert for specific instructions regarding use of these products during the oral lead-in dosing.
- If monthly injections are missed or delayed by more than 7 days and oral therapy has not been taken, clinically reassess the child to determine if resumption of injection dosing remains appropriate. Refer to the package insert for information about managing planned and unplanned missed doses.
- LA CAB/RPV is a complete regimen. Coadministration with other ARV drugs is not recommended.
- When LA CAB/RPV injections are stopped, residual concentrations may remain measurable for up to 12 months or longer. It is essential to initiate an alternative, fully suppressive ARV regimen no later than 1 month after the final injections of LA CAB/RPV.
- Use CAB and RPV with caution when coadministering with a drug that has a known risk of prolonging the QT corrected for heart rate interval or causing Torsades de Pointes (for more information, see CredibleMeds).

Metabolism/Elimination

- CAB is metabolized by uridine diphosphate-glucuronosyl transferase 1A1.
- RPV is a cytochrome P450 3A substrate.

Dosing in Children with Hepatic Impairment

- No dose adjustment of CAB or LA CAB/RPV is necessary in children with mild or moderate hepatic impairment.

Dosing in Children with Renal Impairment

- RPV decreases tubular secretion of creatinine and slightly increases measured serum creatinine, but it does not affect glomerular filtration.
- No dose adjustment of CAB or LA CAB/RPV is necessary in children with mild or moderate renal impairment. However, LA CAB/RPV should be used with caution in children with severe renal impairment or end-stage renal disease. These children should be monitored more frequently for adverse events.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Cabotegravir (CAB) is metabolized primarily by uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1 (UGT1A1). CAB **is contraindicated** in children receiving strong inducers of UGT1A1 because such inducers decrease CAB plasma concentrations which may result in a loss of virologic response.
- Rilpivirine (RPV) is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A substrate, and RPV concentrations may be affected when administered with CYP3A-modulating medications.
- A child's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions before CAB plus RPV is administered.
- CAB and RPV are both highly protein bound and unlikely to be removed by hemodialysis.
- Coadministering oral RPV with drugs that increase gastric pH may decrease plasma concentrations of RPV.
    - Antacids should not be taken 2 hours before or 4 hours after oral RPV.
    - H2 receptor antagonists should not be administered 12 hours before or 4 hours after oral RPV.
    - Oral RPV **is contraindicated** with proton pump inhibitors.
- Rifamycin drugs significantly reduce CAB and RPV plasma concentrations. For children who are concomitantly receiving rifabutin and oral RPV, the dose of RPV should be doubled to 50 mg once daily and taken with a meal. Coadministration of the following drugs **is contraindicated:**
    - Rifampin and oral RPV
    - Rifampin or rifapentine and CAB
    - Rifabutin and long-acting injectable CAB and RPV (LA CAB/RPV)

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Injection site reactions, insomnia, headache, rash, elevated creatine phosphokinase serum concentrations
- *More common:* In studies of adults, 7.3% of participants who were treated with RPV showed a change in adrenal function characterized by an abnormal 250-microgram adrenocorticotropic hormone stimulation test (peak cortisol level <18.1 micrograms/dL). In a study of adolescents, 6 of 30 participants (20%) developed this abnormality.[1] The clinical significance of these results is unknown.
- *Less common (more severe):* Depression or mood changes, suicidal ideation
- *Rare:* Hepatotoxicity and post-injection reactions, including dyspnea, agitation, abdominal cramping, flushing, sweating, oral numbness, and changes in blood pressure
- *Rare:* RPV drug-induced liver injury has been reported.[2]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV Drug Resistance Mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

CAB oral tablets (Vocabria) and co-packaged LA CAB/RPV (Cabenuva) are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of HIV in children or adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg (2022) and adults (2021). They are not approved for use in children aged <12 years. CAB tablets were approved by the FDA in 2021 for use in adults as part of the oral lead-in prior to beginning LA CAB/RPV or as an oral interim treatment when people miss planned injections.[3,4] CAB and RPV co-packaged extended-release injectable suspensions for IM use are approved for use in people (monthly or every 2 months) who are virologically suppressed on a stable antiretroviral (ARV) regimen with no history of virologic failure or known resistance affecting either of the component drugs.[3]

In December 2021, the FDA approved CAB IM (Apretude) for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in adults and adolescents weighing at least 35 kg; an oral lead-in period of approximately 1 month may be used to assess safety and tolerability but is optional. Refer to the package insert for additional information about dosing and administration,[5] and see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV in the United States for further information about the use of CAB for PrEP.

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics in Clinical Trials

Clinical Trials in Children and Adolescents 12 Years to <18 Years

The safety and efficacy of CAB, an HIV-1 integrase inhibitor, given in combination with RPV, a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI), has been characterized in a series of clinical trials conducted in adults, which form the basis for approval.

The International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) Network Study 2017, More Options for Children and Adolescents (MOCHA), is currently in progress to evaluate the safety, tolerability, acceptability, and pharmacokinetics of this injectable regimen in adolescents (MOCHA Trial) and has reported results leading to FDA approval in this age group.

MOCHA evaluated the safety and pharmacokinetics of intramuscular (IM) long-acting CAB and long-acting RPV in virologically suppressed adolescents aged 12 to 17 years weighing ≥35 kg). In cohort 1, after 4 to 6 weeks of oral CAB (n=30) or RPV (n=25), participants received IM long-acting CAB or long-acting RPV every 4 weeks or 8 weeks per the adult dosing regimens while continuing pre-study ART. Injection site reactions were observed but did not lead to any treatment discontinuations. Two adolescents experienced Grade 3 drug-related adverse events, one due to insomnia (CAB arm) and one due to hypersensitivity reaction to oral RPV, which led to discontinuation.[6,7] In a concurrent assessment of adolescent and parental experiences with IM treatment in MOCHA, overall perceptions of the injectable treatment were favorable. Of the 21

adolescents who received all three study injections, >90% "definitely" or "probably" wanted to continue IM treatment.[8,9] For participants receiving IM CAB or IM RPV, exposures were similar to those observed in adults. In cohort 2, 144 virologically suppressed adolescents with HIV-1 received 4 weeks of oral CAB plus RPV followed by IM CAB 600 mg and IM RPV 900 mg every 2 months. The 1st and 2nd injections were 4 weeks apart, with subsequent injections every 8 weeks. Adverse reactions were reported in 35% of adolescents receiving CAB plus RPV with the majority classified as Grade 1 or Grade 2 injection site reactions. Two participants had Grade 3 injection site reactions: injection site abscess (n = 2) and injection site pain (symptoms resolved in both participants). Non-injection-site associated adverse reactions reported by more than one participant (regardless of severity) were headache (n = 3), nausea (n = 2), rash (n = 2) and pruritic rash (n = 2).[10] No virologic failure was observed through Week 24. Predose concentrations of CAB and RPV were similar to those in adults. One participant had a low CAB pre-dose concentration at Week 24 (0.03 µg/mL). Overall, 97% participants at week 8 and 99% of participants at week 24 preferred injectable medications over daily oral dosing which was driven primarily by convenience and burden reduction (i.e., adherence-related stress and increased privacy).[11]

Intermittent viremias have been reported in young adults transitioned to LA CAB/RPV with oral lead-in.[12] The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV notes that significant questions remain regarding the use of LA CAB/RPV in children and adolescents, including whether an oral lead-in is beneficial in the adolescent population, whether there are additional adverse effects specific to the pediatric population, whether the use of a two-drug nucleoside-sparing regimen for children with significant ARV treatment history is appropriate, and what potential implementation challenges might exist (e.g., cost, procurement and access, retention in care).[13]

Clinical Trials in Adults

The Phase 3 Antiretroviral Therapy as Long-Acting Suppression (ATLAS) study randomized stable, virologically suppressed adults to receive either CAB and RPV (n = 308) or continue their oral antiretroviral therapy (ART) (n = 308). Participants assigned to CAB and RPV initiated therapy with an oral regimen for 4 weeks prior to beginning monthly IM injections. The initial assessment at 48 weeks demonstrated that switching to monthly LA CAB/RPV was noninferior to continuing a three-drug oral therapy. After 48 weeks, participants were allowed to transition to injections every 2 months in a follow-up study (ATLAS-2M, see below); 52 participants remaining on the original ATLAS study were included in the 96-week analysis. Adverse events were more common among participants receiving injectable ART; injection site reactions were common, but only 1% withdrew from the study because of these events.[14] The ATLAS-2M trial randomized participants to monthly IM CAB 400 mg and RPV 600 mg (n = 523) or every-2-month injections of CAB 600 mg and RPV 900 mg (n = 522); it enrolled both new participants and those continuing from the ATLAS trial. After 96 weeks, the every-2-month injections were noninferior to monthly injections, with 11 (2%) confirmed virologic failures in the every-2-month injection group and 6 (1%) in the monthly injection group. No new safety signals were identified, and the rate of injection site reactions—the most common adverse event—was similar across treatment arms. Of those failing the every-2-month injection regimen, a majority had NNRTI resistance–associated mutations.[15]

The First Long-Acting Injectable Regimen (FLAIR) study enrolled 631 treatment-naive adults and initiated treatment with a standard oral ARV regimen consisting of dolutegravir/abacavir/lamivudine (DTG/ABC/3TC) for 20 weeks. Those participants with documented HIV-1 RNA <50 copies/mL after 16 weeks were randomized to either continue oral DTG/ABC/3TC (n = 283) or switch to oral

CAB and RPV for 4 weeks, followed by monthly injections of CAB and RPV (n = 283). After 96 weeks of randomized therapy, nine participants (3.2%) in each arm had HIV RNA >50 copies/mL. Adverse events were common in both treatment groups, but adverse events leading to withdrawal from the study were observed in only 14 (5%) participants in the LA CAB/RPV group and 4 (1%) in the oral standard care group. Injection site reactions were the most common adverse events, reported by 245 (88%) participants in the LA CAB/RPV, and lasted a median of 3 days.[16] The FLAIR study was extended to include an assessment of switching those participants remaining in the oral ARV arm after 120 weeks to LA CAB/RPV either with or without the initial oral lead-in phase. There were no differences between the lead-in group and the direct-to-injection group in terms of safety, tolerability, or efficacy through an additional 24 weeks on the study.[17]

These studies demonstrated noninferiority of switching to monthly LA CAB/RPV compared to continuing oral ART. In all studies, adults expressed a high degree of treatment satisfaction and preference for the LA CAB/RPV regimen. Although documented virologic failure with the LA CAB/RPV regimen has been rare to date, investigators have attempted to assess the baseline factors associated with treatment failure. In a multivariate analysis of the adult LA CAB/RPV Phase 3 trials, presence of at least two baseline factors of RPV resistance–associated mutations, HIV-1 subtype A6/A1, and body mass index >30 kg/m^2 was associated with increased risk of virologic failure at 48 weeks.[18]

Pharmacokinetics

The pharmacokinetics (PK) of IM CAB are driven by slow absorption from the injection site. IM CAB reaches its maximum plasma concentration in adults in about 7 days and has a mean half-life of 5.6 to 11.5 weeks. Measurable levels of CAB can be detected in plasma for up to a year or longer. Due to this prolonged drug exposure, it is essential to initiate an alternative, fully suppressive ARV regimen no later than 1 month after the final injections of CAB and RPV to minimize the potential risk of developing viral resistance.[3] The PK profiles observed in adolescents enrolled in MOCHA were comparable to those observed in adults receiving monthly long-acting injectable CAB and RPV in the ATLAS and FLAIR studies described above.[6]

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Dolutegravir (DTG, Tivicay, Tivicay PD)

Updated: August 06, 2025
Reviewed: December 04, 2024

Formulations

Tablets

- Dispersible tablets for oral suspension [Tivicay PD] 5 mg
- Film-coated tablets [Tivicay] 50 mg

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Dovato] Dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg
- [Juluca] Dolutegravir 50 mg/rilpivirine 25 mg
- [Triumeq] Abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg
- [Triumeq PD] Abacavir 60 mg/dolutegravir 5 mg/lamivudine 30 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

All formulations and FDCs of dolutegravir (DTG) are U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved for use in treatment-naive or treatment-experienced pediatric, adolescent, and adult patients naive to the integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) drug class. The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV endorses the use of DTG as appropriate for some children with prior INSTI use (see Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy and Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure in Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy).

Neonate Dose

- DTG is not approved by the FDA for use in neonates.

Selected Adverse Events

- Insomnia
- Headache
- Neuropsychiatric symptoms (i.e., depression and/or suicidal thoughts or actions), especially in patients with a history of psychiatric illness
- Rare cases of hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs), including rash and DRESS (drug reaction [or rash] with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms), constitutional symptoms, and organ dysfunction (including liver injury)

Special Instructions

- DTG may be taken with or without food.
- DTG should be taken 2 hours before or 6 hours after taking cation-containing antacids or laxatives, sucralfate, oral iron supplements, oral calcium supplements, or buffered medications.

[Tivicay PD] DTG Dispersible Tablets

Infant (Aged ≥4 Weeks and Weighing ≥3 kg), Child, and Adolescent Dose

Pediatric Body Weight	Recommended Dose[a] of DTG Dispersible Tablets	Number of 5-mg Tablets
3 kg to <6 kg	5 mg once daily	1
6 kg to <10 kg	15 mg once daily	3
10 kg to <14 kg	20 mg once daily	4
14 kg to <20 kg	25 mg once daily	5
≥20 kg	30 mg once daily	6

[a] If certain drugs that induce uridine diphosphate glucuronyl transferase (UGT) 1A or cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A are coadministered, administer DTG dispersible tablets twice daily (see the Drug Interactions section below).

[Tivicay] DTG Film-Coated Tablets

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥14 kg) Dose

- DTG film-coated tablets and DTG dispersible tablets are not bioequivalent and are not interchangeable on a milligram-per-milligram basis. Each formulation has different doses.

Dosing of Film-Coated Tablets for Pediatric Patients Weighing ≥14 kg Who Can Swallow Tablets

Pediatric Body Weight	Recommended Dose[a] of DTG Film-Coated Tablets	Number of Tablets
14 kg to <20 kg	40 mg once daily	4 x 10 mg[b]
≥20 kg	50 mg once daily	1 x 50 mg

[a] If certain drugs that induce UGT1A or CYP3A are coadministered, administer DTG tablets twice daily (see the Drug Interactions section below).

[b] 10-mg tablets are no longer commercially available. Dosing from the package insert remains in the table above.

Some infants may have received raltegravir as presumptive HIV therapy prior to diagnosis. These infants and other infants and children with HIV who have received INSTIs are candidates to switch to once-daily DTG if they are virologically suppressed or have no mutations associated with resistance to INSTIs.

- For DTG dispersible tablets, fully disperse the dispersible tablets in 5 mL of drinking water (if using one or three tablets) or in 10 mL of drinking water (if using four, five, or six tablets) in the supplied cup; swirl the suspension so that no lumps remain. After full dispersion and within 30 minutes of mixing, administer the oral suspension. Rinse the dosing cup with a small amount of water and give this additional water to the child to ensure the child takes the full dose and no medication remains in the dosing cup.
- DTG dispersible tablets may be swallowed whole. If more than one tablet is required, swallow one tablet at a time to reduce the risk of choking. DTG dispersible tablets should not be chewed or crushed.
- For ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible tablets, tablets should be fully dispersed in the appropriate volume of drinking water in the supplied cup and the suspension should be swirled so that no lumps remain. After full dispersion and within 30 minutes of mixing, administer the oral suspension. Rinse the dosing cup with a small amount of water and give this additional water to the child to ensure the child takes the full dose and no medication remains in the dosing cup.
- ABC/DTG/3TC dispersible tablets should not be swallowed whole, chewed, or crushed.
- No data exist regarding dispersion in breast milk or any vehicles other than water.
- In patients who have difficulty swallowing the film-coated tablets whole, 50-mg tablets may be either split into halves followed by immediate ingestion of both halves of the tablet or crushed and added to a small amount of semisolid food or liquid, all of which should be consumed immediately.[1]
- The efficacy of DTG is reduced in patients with certain combinations of INSTI-resistance mutations. DTG dosing strategies in pediatric patients with first-generation INSTI mutations differ from those in adults (see Table A and the Resistance section below). Screen patients for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before using FDC tablets that contain 3TC. Severe acute exacerbations of HBV can occur after discontinuation of 3TC. Patients with HBV/HIV coinfection who receive Dovato will require additional treatment for chronic HBV infection.

Adult Dose

- One 50-mg DTG film-coated tablet once daily
- If certain drugs that induce UGT1A or CYP3A are coadministered, administer DTG 50 mg twice daily (see the Drug Interactions section below).
- Adults who are INSTI-experienced with certain INSTI-associated resistance mutations or clinically suspected INSTI resistance should receive 50 mg DTG twice daily.

[Dovato] DTG/Lamivudine (3TC)

Adolescents Aged ≥12 Years and Weighing ≥25 kg and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with or without food as a complete regimen in antiretroviral (ARV)-naive adolescents with no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Dovato

[Juluca] DTG/Rilpivirine

Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with a meal as a complete regimen to replace the current ARV regimen in patients who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months, with no history of treatment failure, and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Juluca

[Triumeq PD] Abacavir (ABC)/DTG/3TC

Children Aged ≥3 Months and Weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg

- Dispersible Triumeq PD tablets are FDA approved for children weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg. They are not recommended for children weighing ≥25 kg.
- Administer the appropriate number of tablets for a child's weight once daily. Tablets should be dispersed in 15 mL of water if using three tablets or 20 mL of water if using four to six tablets (see Special Instructions).

Weight-Band Dosing of Triumeq PD Tablets for Children Aged **≥3 Months and** Weighing ≥6 kg

Weight	Recommended Daily Dose	Number of Triumeq PD Tablets
6 kg to <10 kg	ABC 180 mg, DTG 15 mg, 3TC 90 mg	3
10 kg to <14 kg	ABC 240 mg, DTG 20 mg, 3TC 120 mg	4
14 kg to <20 kg	ABC 300 mg, DTG 25 mg, 3TC 150 mg	5
20 kg to <25 kg	ABC 360 mg, DTG 30 mg, 3TC 180 mg	6
≥25 kg	Use Triumeq. See below.	

- For any FDC tablets containing ABC, test patients for the HLA-B*5701 allele before starting therapy to predict the risk of HSRs. Patients who test positive for the HLA-B*5701 allele should not be given an ABC-containing FDC. Patients with no prior HLA-B*5701 testing who are tolerating an ABC-containing regimen do not need to be tested. See the Abacavir section.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Substrate for UGT1A1 and CYP3A. Also, a substrate of UGT1A3, UGT1A9, breast cancer resistance protein (BCRP), and P-glycoprotein (P-gp) *in vitro*. Drugs that induce these enzymes and transporters may decrease plasma concentrations of DTG. Drugs that inhibit these enzymes or transporters may increase DTG plasma concentrations.

DTG Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- No dose adjustment is necessary in patients with mild or moderate hepatic impairment. Due to the lack of data, DTG is not recommended for use in patients with severe hepatic impairment.
- FDC tablets containing ABC or 3TC should not be used in patients with impaired hepatic function.

DTG Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- DTG decreases tubular secretion of creatinine and increases measured serum creatinine without affecting glomerular filtration.
- No dose adjustment is required in INSTI-naive patients with mild, moderate, or severe renal impairment, or in INSTI-experienced patients with mild or moderate renal impairment.
- Use DTG with caution in INSTI-experienced patients with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance [CrCl] <30 mL/min), because DTG concentrations will be decreased. The cause of this decrease is unknown.
- FDC tablets containing 3TC (Dovato, Triumeq PD, and Triumeq) should not be used in patients who have CrCl <30 mL/min or patients who are on dialysis because the doses of 3TC cannot be adjusted. Data about the FDC DTG/3TC (Dovato) suggest that patients with a sustained creatinine clearance 30–49 mL/min may experience a higher 3TC exposure and should be monitored for hematologic toxicities and potential FDC discontinuation and subsequent adjustment of the treatment regimen. See package inserts for additional information.

• For use in patients who are ARV naive or ARV experienced (but INSTI naive) and who are not being treated with UGT1A1 or CYP3A inducers • See the Abacavir section for special instructions about testing for ABC hypersensitivity. [Triumeq] ABC/DTG/3TC *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with or without food • For use in patients who are ARV naive or ARV experienced (but INSTI naive) and who are not being treated with UGT1A1 or CYP3A inducers • See the Abacavir section for special instructions about testing for ABC hypersensitivity.	

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Dolutegravir (DTG) is a uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase (UGT) 1A and cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A substrate and may require dose adjustments when administered with UGT1A-modulating or CYP3A-modulating medications. DTG dosing should be adjusted to twice daily (i.e., twice the usual dose) when coadministered with drugs such as efavirenz and rifampin.[2-4] Because etravirine (ETR) significantly reduces plasma DTG concentrations, DTG **should not be administered** with ETR without coadministration of atazanavir/ritonavir, darunavir/ritonavir, or lopinavir/ritonavir, which counteract this effect on DTG concentrations. DTG **should not be administered** with nevirapine because of insufficient data on interactions between these drugs. See the product label for a full listing of significant drug–drug interactions.
- Atazanavir (ATV) is an inhibitor of UGT1A1. In a pharmacologic survey of adult patients who were receiving DTG, patients who also received ATV had plasma concentrations of DTG that were twofold to fourfold higher than those of patients who received other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.[5]
- Before administering DTG, clinicians should carefully review a patient's medication profile for potential drug interactions.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Insomnia and headache. Excessive weight gain and increased body mass index (BMI) have been reported in adults who received DTG in clinical trials and in some pediatric and adolescent cohorts (see Table 17h. Lipodystrophies and Weight Gain),[6-9] whereas other cohort studies have not identified an association with excessive weight gain.[10]

- *Less common (more severe):* Hypersensitivity reactions characterized by rash, constitutional symptoms, and sometimes organ dysfunction; neuropsychiatric symptoms, especially in patients with a history of psychiatric illness. Multiple postmarketing reports note that neuropsychiatric adverse events (AEs) have occurred following the initiation of DTG-based therapy in adults.[11,12]
- *Immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS):* In retrospective observational studies, severe cases of IRIS that required hospitalization appeared to be more frequent in patients who presented with advanced HIV disease and who initiated treatment with integrase strand transfer inhibitors (INSTIs), particularly DTG.[13,14] This phenomenon is presumed to be linked to the rapid decline in HIV RNA observed in patients receiving INSTI-based therapy.
- *Rare:* Hepatotoxicity has been reported; two cases of liver injury were presumed to be related to the use of DTG. One of these cases required liver transplantation.[15,16]
- *Rare:* A single case of drug reaction (or rash) with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS) has been reported.[17]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation. For additional considerations on the impact of nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) resistance and the use of DTG-containing fixed-dose combinations (FDCs), see Recognizing and Managing Antiretroviral Treatment Failure.

The efficacy of DTG is reduced in patients with the INSTI-resistance Q148 substitution plus two or more additional INSTI-resistance mutations, and this reduced efficacy cannot be completely overcome with increased DTG dosing.[18,19]

For INSTI-experienced adults with certain INSTI-resistance mutations or clinically suspected INSTI resistance, the Tivicay package insert recommends giving the standard 50-mg dose twice daily rather than once daily. However, modeling and simulation of this potential strategy with the dispersible tablet formulation of DTG in children suggested elevated maximum plasma concentrations (C_{max}) in comparison to historical data in adults, adolescents, and children would result. Thus, a different dosing strategy was needed for children with certain or clinically suspected INSTI-resistance mutations. The proposed dosing schedule in Table A below was based on simulations with the goal of achieving geometric mean concentration at 12 hours postdose >1.97 µg/mL and area under the curve (AUC) through 12 hours postdose >32.2 µg·h/mL while avoiding elevated C_{max} values.[20] Additionally, the coformulated dispersible tablet containing abacavir (ABC)/DTG/lamivudine (3TC) cannot be used in combination with a separate dose of single-agent dispersible release DTG because the dosing of the separate formulation is not double the regular dose and the modified dosing strategy would result in underdosing the ABC and 3TC components.

Table A. Weight-Band Dosing of Dolutegravir Dispersible Tablets for Pediatric Patients Weighing ≥3 kg and Aged ≥3 Months With First-Generation Integrase Strand Transfer Inhibitors–Resistance Mutations

Weight	Recommended Twice-Daily Dose	Number of Tablets per Dose
3 kg to <6 kg	5 mg	1
6 kg to <10 kg	10 mg	2
10 kg to <14 kg	15 mg	3
14 kg to <20 kg	15 mg	3
20 kg to <30 kg	20 mg	4
30 kg to <40 kg	20 mg	4

Pediatric Use

Approval

DTG is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use, in combination with other ARV drugs, in pediatric patients aged at least 4 weeks and weighing ≥3 kg who are treatment naive or treatment experienced but INSTI naive (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents). DTG dispersible tablets and film-coated tablets in either the single-entity or FDC form can be administered with or without food.[21,22] Pediatric patients weighing ≥20 kg may take the DTG 50-mg film-coated tablets if they are able to swallow tablets.

The combination tablet ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq) is approved by the FDA for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg. Dispersible ABC/DTG/3TC tablets (Triumeq PD) are FDA approved for use in children weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg.

The combination tablet DTG/3TC (Dovato) is approved by the FDA for adolescents weighing ≥25 kg and aged ≥12 years but is not approved for use in children aged <12 years.

The combination tablet DTG/rilpivirine (RPV) (Juluca) is not approved by the FDA for use in children or adolescents. However, the doses of the component drugs that make up this FDC tablet are approved for use in adolescents and the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) generally endorses the use of adult formulations for drugs that have been approved for use in children and adolescents. The FDC tablet may be appropriate for use in certain adolescents. See Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy for additional considerations on the use of this combination.

Formulation Differences: Film-Coated Tablet Compared to Dispersible Tablet

DTG is currently available as either film-coated tablets or dispersible tablets (tablets for oral suspension). The dispersible tablet has 60% to 80% greater bioavailability in adults than the film-coated tablet,[23] so recommended doses using the dispersible tablet cannot be directly compared to

those using the film-coated tablets. The drug exposure provided by the 50-mg film-coated tablet is approximately equal to that of DTG 30 mg administered as dispersible tablets.

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics

Pediatric Patients Aged 4 Weeks to <18 Years

Single-Entity Dolutegravir

IMPAACT P1093 is a multinational, open-label trial of DTG in children with HIV. Data from IMPAACT P1093 Cohort 1 (aged 12 years to <18 years) and Cohort 2 (aged 6 years to <12 years) provided support for use of DTG film-coated tablets in pediatric patients weighing ≥14 kg; Cohort 3 (aged 2 to <6 years), Cohort 4 (aged 6 months to <2 years), and Cohort 5 (aged 4 weeks to <6 months) provided evidence supporting the use of DTG 5-mg dispersible tablets. Dosing recommendations that previously included the 25-mg film-coated tablets have been replaced with other formulations.

Results of pharmacokinetic (PK), safety, and efficacy assessments have been reported sequentially for different age and weight cohorts as data became available; similarly, dosing recommendations have been revised sequentially.[24-26] A total of 181 participants were enrolled across these cohorts, of which 96 received dispersible DTG tablets and 85 received nondispersible formulations.[26] Seventy-five participants received the recommended doses of the film-coated or dispersible tablets based on their weight and age, of which 80% were treatment-experienced and all were INSTI-naive.[27] At Week 48, of the 42 participants with available data, 69% achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL and 79% achieved HIV RNA <400 copies/mL. The effectiveness observed in the trial was comparable to that of treatment-experienced adult participants.[27] The median CD4 T lymphocyte cell (CD4) count (percent) increased from baseline to Week 48 by 141 cells/mm^3 (7%). Overall, the safety profile in P1093 participants was comparable to that observed in adults, and both formulations were well tolerated.[27] Follow-up data among 16 adolescents in Cohort 1 through 144 weeks showed 43% and 35% of participants achieving and maintaining HIV RNA levels <400 copies/mL and <50 copies/mL, respectively.[28] Genotypic testing was available at the time of treatment failure for 6 of the 13 participants; one of these adolescents developed DTG resistance.[26,28]

The Once-daily DTG-based ART in Young people vS Standard thErapY (ODYSSEY) trial, conducted by the Pediatric European Network for the Treatment of AIDS (PENTA), enrolled both treatment-naive and treatment-experienced pediatric patients from the European Union, Thailand, and several African countries; this trial initially evaluated doses approved by the European Medicines Agency at the time the trial started. A total of 707 children aged <18 years were enrolled; 311 children started DTG as first-line therapy, and 396 started DTG as second-line therapy.[29] DTG-based antiretroviral therapy (ART) as both first-line therapy and second-line therapy in children was superior to standard care through 96 weeks of treatment.[30] Results from the younger ODYSSEY cohort of children weighing between 3 kg and 14 kg showed superiority of DTG-based ART compared with other regimens, of which over 70% were protease inhibitor (PI)–based regimens.[30-32] Follow-up data through 192 weeks continued to demonstrate the superiority of DTG-containing ART for virologic suppression compared with first- and second-line ART.[33]

Nested PK substudies within ODYSSEY also evaluated simplified pediatric dosing that aligned with World Health Organization (WHO)–recommended weight bands. PK data are available from a cohort of children weighing >25 kg who switched to the DTG 50-mg film-coated tablet, 20 kg to <25 kg

who received either the DTG 50-mg film-coated tablet or DTG 30 mg administered as six 5-mg dispersible tablets,[34,35]14 kg to <20 kg who received 25 mg, 3 kg to <6 kg and younger than 6 months received 5 mg DTG, 3 kg to <6 kg and older than 6 months who received 10 mg, 6 kg to <10 kg who received 15 mg, and 10 kg to <14 kg who received 20 mg.[35] A total of 19 children weighing <20 kg experienced Grade 3 or higher AEs, including two deaths (one kwashiorkor and one accidental trauma) assessed as unrelated to the study drug. Eleven participants experienced serious AEs, 69% of which were due to infectious diseases.

Combined PK data from P1093 and ODYSSEY across all age/weight cohorts form the basis for the current FDA dose recommendations and are summarized in Table B below. Generally speaking, the AUC and C_{max} values were comparable or higher than adult values, whereas troughs were slightly lower and more variable, but exposures still fell within acceptable exposure ranges across weight bands. These data support the administration of either DTG 30 mg as dispersible tablets or DTG 50 mg as a film-coated tablet in patients weighing ≥20 kg. In addition, modeling and simulations that included UGT1A1 maturation in infants were used to support the dose of DTG in infants at least 4 weeks of age and weighing at least 3 kg. Dosing in neonates is under investigation.

Separate PK studies and population PK models have continued to support adequate DTG exposures among children and adolescents at the currently recommended doses.[21,36-40] Exploratory investigations also have identified that genetic variants in ATP-binding cassette subfamily G member 2 (ABCG2), nuclear receptor subfamily 1 group I member 2, and UGT1A1 may affect DTG PK in infants and children, which may explain some of the additional variability observed in this population.[41] Genetic variants in ABCG2 and UGT1A1 that were associated with higher DTG exposures showed a trend toward sustained virologic suppression.

Table B. Summary of Pharmacokinetic Parameters in Pediatric Participants With HIV-1 (Pooled Analyses for IMPAACT P1093 and ODYSSEY Trials)

Weight Band[a]	Dose[b] of DTG FCT or DTG DT	n	Pharmacokinetic Parameter **Geometric Mean (%** CV)		
			C_{max} (mcg/mL)	AUC_{0-24h} (mcg·h/mL)	C_{24h} (ng/mL)
3 kg to <6 kg	DTG DT 5 mg once daily	8	3.80 (34)	49.37 (49)	962 (98)
6 kg to <10 kg	DTG DT 15 mg once daily	17	5.27 (50)	57.17 (76)	706 (177)
10 kg to <14 kg	DTG DT 20 mg once daily	13	5.99 (33)	68.75 (48)	977 (100)
14 kg to <20 kg	DTG DT 25 mg once daily	19	5.97 (42)	58.97 (44)	725 (75)
20 kg to <25 kg	DTG DT 30 mg once daily	9	7.16 (26)	71.53 (26)	759 (73)
≥20 kg	DTG FCT 50 mg once daily	49	4.92 (40)	54.98 (43)	778 (62)

Table B: Summary of Pharmacokinetic Parameters in Pediatric Participants With HIV-1 (Pooled Analyses for IMPAACT P1093 and ODYSSEY Trials)

Adults[c]	DTG FCT 50 mg once daily	N/A	3.67 (20)	53.6 (27)	1,110 (46)
Adults[c]	DTG FCT 50 mg twice daily	N/A	4.15 (29)	75.1 (35)	2,120 (47)

[a] Data are from two weight-band-based pharmacokinetic substudies in the ODYSSEY trial.

[b] The bioavailability of DTG tablets for oral suspension is approximately 1.6-fold that of DTG film-coated tablets.

[c] Adult pharmacokinetic data are based on population pharmacokinetic analyses from clinical trials.[27]

Key: AUC_{0-24h} = 24-hour area under the curve; C_{24h} = concentration at 24 hours postdose; C_{max} = maximum plasma concentration; CV = coefficient of variation; DT = dispersible tablets; DTG = dolutegravir; FCT = film-coated tablets

Dolutegravir/Abacavir/Lamivudine

The PK, safety, tolerability, and efficacy of dispersible and immediate-release ABC/DTG/3TC FDC tablet formulations were investigated in 57 children weighing 6 kg to <40 kg and aged <12 years among those enrolled in the IMPAACT 2019 study.[42] Children were dosed across five weight bands in alignment with the WHO ARV dosing recommendations for each component. Children weighing 6 kg to <25 kg received dispersible FDC tablets containing ABC 60 mg/DTG 5 mg/3TC 30 mg (Triumeq PD), and those weighing 25 kg to <40 kg received the immediate-release FDC tablet containing ABC 600 mg/DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg (Triumeq). Drug exposures for all three components were comparable to previous studies in children and adults with HIV, including DTG exposures from IMPAACT P1093 and ODYSSEY. Dosing was confirmed based on PK and safety criteria across all weight bands. No Grade 3 or 4 AEs related to the drug components were identified through 24 weeks of treatment, and none of the participants discontinued the study drug because of AEs. At Week 24, 54 of 57 (95%) participants were suppressed to HIV-1 RNA <200 copies/mL, 52 of 57 (91%) were suppressed to HIV-1 RNA <50 copies/mL, and all treatment-experienced patients who switched to ABC/DTG/3TC maintained suppression. Both formulations were also well tolerated, and 10 of 11 participants in the highest weight band were able to swallow the larger immediate-release tablet whole and intact (see Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents). This finding contrasted a separate cohort of 12 adolescents in Spain, where half needed to crush or split the immediate-release tablet because of its size.[43] Analyses of safety and efficacy data through 48 weeks in IMPAACT 2019 are ongoing.

Population PK modeling of IMPAACT 2019 data through 48 weeks further demonstrated alignment of PK data collected within this study with existing population PK models for the individual components, further supporting dose confirmation of the dispersible FDC.[40] These models were then modified with maturation functions specific to each component to evaluate whether a single ABC 60 mg/DTG 5 mg/3TC 30 mg tablet in infants weighing ≥3 kg to <6 kg (aged ≥4 weeks) could achieve comparable drug exposures observed in older children and adults based on dosing simulations, and thus provide comparable safety and efficacy observed in older children and adults.[44] These models used data from young children across weight bands from IMPAACT 2019 (≥6 kg), P1093 (≥3 kg), ODYSSEY (≥3 kg) clinical trials for DTG, and the PETITE clinical trial for ABC and 3TC.[26,35,40,42,45,46] Review of the ABC/3TC data from the PETITE study in neonates[45,46] and available ABC, 3TC, and DTG safety data in infants aged <3 months (see below under Pediatric Postmarketing Safety Studies) were used to interpolate safety for infants aged ≥4 weeks to <3 months and suggested no safety concerns for coadministration of ABC/3TC/DTG in young infants. Notably, the doses in the safety evaluation were mostly in alignment with the WHO weight-band dose

recommendations of fixed-dose formulations of ABC 120 mg/3TC 60 mg, which were higher than those under evaluation in this modeling and simulation. Based on these findings, the Panel supports the use of the single ABC/3TC/DTG FDC dispersible tablet as an alternative to the separate formulations of ABC, 3TC, and DTG in infants weighing ≥3 kg to <6 kg and aged ≥4 weeks to facilitate treatment adherence.

Retrospective Cohort Studies

Efficacy and safety of DTG-based regimens have been evaluated in multiple observational pediatric cohorts.[47-51] These studies have included a variety of populations, including children, adolescents, and young adults who were ART experienced but INSTI naive and either virologically suppressed or viremic at baseline. Virologic suppression rates between about 80% to 93% have been reported following at least 6 months to 24 months of DTG-containing therapy.[48-53] Discontinuation rates due to toxicity have generally been low (<1%).[48] Factors associated with a higher likelihood of virologic suppression following the switch included suppressed viral loads at baseline,[47-49,51,52] use of once-daily TDF/3TC/DTG as a single-tablet regimen (compared with ABC/3TC/DTG or ZDV/3TC/DTG),[48] and good medication adherence. Factors associated with lower odds of virologic suppression included age increases and poorer adherence.[48,50,51] Given the retrospective nature of these analyses, many of which were performed following national rollout programs, direct comparisons among participants who were not suppressed and did not switch to a DTG-containing regimen could not always be performed.[48]

Although observational studies have shown high virologic suppression rates, emerging INSTI mutations specific to DTG have been reported among children being monitored in national treatment programs.[53] Thus, continued assessments of sustained long-term virologic suppression (i.e., >24 months) and the development of resistance will be important.[54,55] Additionally, one study noted[52] more than one-third of children experienced at least two regimen changes during the follow-up period from 2019 to 2021, some of which involved switching from DTG to either a PI or non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). These changes were attributable, in part, to drug shortage, illustrating the importance of continued access and supply of DTG to support rollout initiatives.[43]

Pediatric Postmarketing Safety Studies

Several studies continue to investigate longer-term safety outcomes in pediatric populations with the expanded use of DTG. Notable outcomes of interest include neuropsychiatric outcomes and growth, weight gain, and metabolic effects over time based on findings in adults.

ODYSSEY reported a small number of neuropsychiatric AEs among 707 children and adolescents randomized to DTG, which was not significantly different from those reported in study participants receiving standard care. However, participants receiving DTG were more likely to have suicidal ideation than those receiving standard care; however, these symptoms were described as transient and did not lead to changes in ART.[31] A separate systematic review of INSTI use in 3,448 children with perinatal HIV infection identified rates of neuropsychiatric effects from 1% to 16% among those receiving DTG.[56]

Reports of weight gain among adults enrolled in clinical trials prompted similar studies to investigate the metabolic effects of DTG in adolescents. Some studies have identified increases in weight-for-age z-score and BMI-for-age z-score,[7,9,32] as well as trunk fat and trunk/total body fat ratios.[6]

However, others have not identified significant changes[8,10,57] or lower rates of change among those with baseline BMI ≥50th percentile.[58] Lipid changes also have been evaluated, with one study detailing decreases in total cholesterol and low-density lipoproteins, while serum triglycerides decreased early in the study and subsequently increased.[6] In another study, adolescents who switched to DTG (n = 30) demonstrated reduced hepatic steatosis and lower total cholesterol and triglycerides compared to those who remained on their initial ART regimens (84% PI-based).[57] Based on these collective data, weight gain may be observed in adolescents receiving DTG, as observed in adults; the long-term clinical significance of these changes is unclear, and further studies are needed in adolescents and children receiving DTG. See the What to Start section for additional considerations.

Simplification of Treatment

Dolutegravir With Rilpivirine

Two trials in adults (Regimen Switch to Dolutegravir + Rilpivirine from Current Antiretroviral Regimen in Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 Infected and Virologically Suppressed Adults [SWORD-1 and SWORD-2]) supported the approval of a DTG 50-mg/RPV 25-mg FDC tablet as a complete regimen for treatment simplification or maintenance therapy in selected patients. The two identical SWORD trials enrolled 1,024 virologically suppressed patients who had been on stable ART for at least 6 months and who had no history of treatment failure or evidence of resistance mutations. The participants were randomized either to receive DTG/RPV or to continue their suppressive ARV regimen. After 48 weeks of treatment, 95% of patients in both arms maintained HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL.[59] After 52 weeks, the participants who had been randomized to continue their suppressive ARV regimen were switched to DTG/RPV. At 148 weeks, 84% of the early-switch patients and 90% of the late-switch patients remained virologically suppressed, and only 11 patients receiving dual therapy met virologic failure criteria. No INSTI-resistance was identified.[60] During the comparative randomized phase of the study, more AEs were reported and led to discontinuation in the DTG/RPV arm. In a subgroup of the SWORD study, small but statistically significant increases in hip and spine bone mineral density and bone turnover markers were observed in patients whose original ARV regimen contained TDF.[61]

Although Juluca is not approved by the FDA for use in adolescents, the doses of the component drugs that make up this FDC tablet are approved for use in adolescents. The Panel generally endorses the use of adult formulations for drugs that have been approved for use in children and adolescents, and these products may be appropriate for use in certain adolescents. The use of DTG/RPV regimens could be useful in patients in whom there is concern for toxicity from NRTIs. However, the Panel notes that adolescents may have difficulties adhering to therapy and suggests considering close monitoring with viral load testing (see the Treatment Simplification section of Management of Children Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy).

Dolutegravir With Lamivudine

The approval of DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg as a complete regimen in adults was supported by data from two randomized, double-blind, controlled trials (Efficacy, Safety, and Tolerability Study Comparing Dolutegravir Plus Lamivudine With Dolutegravir Plus Tenofovir/Emtricitabine in Treatment naive HIV Infected Subjects [GEMINI-1 and GEMINI-2]). GEMINI-1 and GEMINI-2 were identical 148-week trials that enrolled a total of 1,433 adults with HIV who had plasma HIV RNA levels between 1,000 copies/mL and ≤500,000 copies/mL at screening and no evidence of major resistance mutations or hepatitis B virus infection. Participants were randomized to receive

either DTG plus 3TC or DTG plus 3TC/TDF. During 96 weeks of treatment, 86% of patients who received DTG plus 3TC and 89.5% of patients who received DTG plus 3TC/TDF achieved HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL. Patients who received DTG plus 3TC had a lower rate of adverse drug reactions (19.6%) than those who received DTG plus 3TC/TDF (25%).[62]

The combination of DTG/3TC was evaluated as initial ART in adolescents weighing ≥25 kg and aged ≥12 years to <18 years with baseline HIV-1 RNA between 100 copies/mL and ≤500,000 copies/mL through the DANCE study. A total of 32 participants were enrolled, of which 81% and 69% achieved HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL at Weeks 48 and 96, respectively.[63] These results included individuals with missing data due to site closures; thus, sensitivity analyses were performed with the participants excluded. Virologic suppression rates in the sensitivity analyses were 87% (26 of 30) at Week 48 and 88% (22 of 25) at Week 96. Drug exposures for both components were also comparable to historical data in adults and the combination was overall safe and well tolerated.

Both film-coated tablet and dispersible tablet formulations of DTG/3TC are also under active investigation in children aged 2 years to <15 years of age and weighing 6 kg to <40 kg through the D3/Penta21 study.[64] The doses under evaluation include DTG 15 mg/3TC 90 mg for 6 kg to <10 kg, DTG 20 mg/3TC 120 mg for 10 kg to <14kg, DTG 25 mg/3TC 150 mg for 14 kg to <20 kg, DTG 30 mg/3TC 180 mg or DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg film-coated tablet for 20 kg to <25 kg, and DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg for ≥25 kg, with DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg as the only film-coated formulation. These doses were largely aligned with the WHO weight-band dosing recommendations, except for the DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg FCT option in those weighing 20 kg to <25 kg, which is 1.3 times higher than the currently recommended dose from that weight band. Preliminary PK data from nested substudies in 53 children weighing 10 kg to <40 kg demonstrated that all participants achieved DTG trough concentrations (C_{trough}) above the *in vitro* protein-adjusted 90% maximal inhibitory concentration (IC_{90}) of 0.064 mg/L and 50 of 53 children exceeded the 90% effective concentration (EC_{90}) of 0.32 mg/L.[65] Exposures for DTG and 3TC were generally comparable to historical data from ODYSSEY and IMPAACT 2019, respectively.

Dolutegravir With Darunavir/Ritonavir

The combination of once-daily darunavir/ritonavir (DRV/r) with an INSTI is being investigated in a randomized non-inferiority trial among virologically suppressed children aged 6 years to <18 years through the SMILE Penta-17-ANRS 152 clinical trial.[66] Participants were randomized to either once-daily DRV/r with an INSTI or continuing their standard-of-care regimen consisting of a boosted PI or NNRTI with a NRTI backbone. A total of 318 participants were enrolled between 2016 and 2019, of which 158 were randomized to DRV/r with an INSTI (97% DTG, 3% elvitegravir). DRV/r with an INSTI was non-inferior to standard of care at Week 48 (HIV viral load ≥50 copies/mL in 5% for DRV/r with an INSTI vs. 7.6% in the standard-of-care arm; difference −2.5% [95% CI, −7.6% and 2.5%]). Secondary analyses comparing DRV/r with an INSTI versus standard of care revealed decreases in CD4 counts (−48.3 cells/mm^3 [95% CI, −93.4 and −3.2; $P = 0.036$] and mean high-density lipoprotein change from baseline (−4.1 mg/dL [95% CI, −6.7 and −1.4; $P = 0.003$]), and increases in weight and BMI (+1.97 kg [95% CI, 1.1 and 2.9; $P < 0.001$] and +0.66 kg/m^2 [95% CI, 0.3 and 1.0; $P < 0.001$], respectively). A nested PK substudy in 153 adolescents aged ≥12 years to <18 years from SMILE also demonstrated that total and unbound DTG concentrations were adequate and well above the protein-adjusted IC_{90} for DTG.[67] DTG C_{trough} were also comparable to those measured in adults receiving 50 mg once daily. Apparent clearance of the unbound drug was influenced by total bilirubin concentrations and Asian ethnicity.

Crushing Film-Coated Tablets for Administration

Dispersible tablets are now considered the preferred formulation for pediatric patients weighing <20 kg, and film-coated tablets should not be used in children weighing <14 kg. In children weighing >14 kg who have difficulty swallowing whole tablets, when the preferred dispersible tablets are not available, the 50-mg tablets either may be split into halves followed by immediate ingestion of **both halves** of the tablet or crushed and added to a small amount of semisolid food or liquid, all of which must be consumed **immediately.**[1] In healthy adults, the use of crushed tablets resulted in slightly higher exposures than the use of whole tablets.[68] No information exists on the impact of splitting or crushing film-coated tablets on palatability. Some case reports describe DTG-containing film-coated tablets being crushed and successfully administered via orogastric tube[69] or nasogastric tube.[70] If DTG is administered via enteral tube, care should be taken to disperse the tablets completely and flush the tube to avoid clogging.

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Elvitegravir (EVG)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: Elvitegravir is available only in fixed-dose combination (FDC) tablets.

FDC Tablets

- [Genvoya] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg
- [Stribild] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

[Genvoya] Elvitegravir/Cobicistat/Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Alafenamide (EVG/c/FTC/TAF)

Child (Weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg)

- Limited data are available on the dosing of the low-dose pediatric formulation of Genvoya (EVG 90 mg/cobicistat [COBI or c] 90 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 6 mg) in children ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg. This formulation is approved for use in young children by the European Medicines Agency; however, this formulation is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and is not available for clinical use in the United States.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food in antiretroviral therapy (ART)–naive or treatment-experienced people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ART regimen for ≥6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Genvoya.

[Stribild] Elvitegravir/Cobicistat/Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (EVG/c/FTC/TDF)

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food in ART-naive or treatment-experienced people who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ART regimen for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Stribild.

Selected Adverse Events

Genvoya- and Stribild-Associated Adverse Events

- Nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, headache

Special Instructions

- Administer both Genvoya and Stribild with food.
- Genvoya and Stribild should be administered at least 2 hours before or after antacids and supplements or multivitamins that contain iron, calcium, aluminum, and/or magnesium.
- When using Genvoya or Stribild, monitor serum creatinine, serum phosphorus, estimated creatinine clearance (CrCl), urine glucose, and urine protein at baseline and every 3–6 months while on therapy. In children who are at risk of renal impairment, also monitor serum phosphate. Children with an increase in serum creatinine levels >0.4 mg/dL from the baseline should be closely monitored for renal safety.
- Screen children for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection before initiating FTC, TDF, or TAF. Severe acute exacerbation of HBV can occur when FTC, TDF, or TAF are discontinued. In children with HBV, monitor hepatic function for several months after stopping therapy with FTC, TDF, or TAF.
- For information on crushing and cutting tablets, see the Information on Crushing and Liquid Drug Formulations table from Toronto General Hospital.

	Metabolism/Elimination
	• EVG is metabolized by cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and is a modest inducer of CYP2C9. • EVG is available only in combination with the pharmacokinetic enhancer (boosting agent) COBI in Stribild or Genvoya. Refer to the Cobicistat, Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate, and Tenofovir Alafenamide sections for further details on these drugs. EVG Dosing in Children With Hepatic Impairment • Stribild and Genvoya **should not be used** in children with severe hepatic impairment. EVG Dosing in Children With Renal Impairment • Stribild **should not be initiated** in children with estimated CrCl <70 mL/min and should be discontinued in children with estimated CrCl <50 mL/min. FTC and TDF require dose adjustments in these children, and these adjustments cannot be achieved with an FDC tablet. • Genvoya is **not recommended** in children with estimated CrCl 15 to <30 mL/min or in children with estimated CrCl <15 mL/min who are not receiving chronic hemodialysis.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Absorption:* Elvitegravir (EVG) plasma concentrations are lower with concurrent administration of divalent cations due to the formation of complexes in the gastrointestinal tract and not due to changes in gastric pH. Therefore, Stribild and Genvoya should be administered at least 2 hours before or after administering antacids and supplements or multivitamins that contain iron, calcium, aluminum, and/or magnesium.[1]
- *Metabolism:* Stribild and Genvoya contain EVG and cobicistat (COBI). COBI itself does not have antiretroviral activity, but it is a cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 inhibitor that acts as a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer, similar to ritonavir (RTV).[2] EVG is metabolized predominantly by CYP3A4, secondarily by uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase 1A1/3, and by oxidative metabolism pathways. EVG is a moderate inducer of CYP2C9. COBI is a strong inhibitor of CYP3A4 and a weak inhibitor of CYP2D6. In addition, COBI inhibits the adenosine triphosphate–dependent transporters, P-glycoprotein and the breast cancer resistance protein, and the organic anion-transporting (OAT) polypeptides OATP1B1 and OATP1B3. See the Cobicistat section for a more detailed summary of drug interactions. Multiple drug interactions are possible when using both EVG and COBI. Neither Stribild nor Genvoya should be administered concurrently with products or regimens that contain RTV because of the similar effects of COBI and RTV on CYP3A4 metabolism. Coadministration of medications that induce or inhibit

CYP3A4 may respectively decrease or increase exposures of EVG and COBI. Coadministration of medications that are CYP3A4 substrates may result in clinically significant adverse reactions that are severe, life-threatening, or fatal, or may result in loss of therapeutic effect if dependent on conversion to an active metabolite due to CYP3A4 inhibition by COBI. The combination of Stribild or Genvoya plus darunavir (DRV) has been reported to have potentially significant drug interactions between elvitegravir/cobicistat (EVG/c) and DRV.[3-6] However, a single study among treatment-experienced adults with HIV who switched from a virologically suppressive (<50 copies/mL) regimen containing DRV boosted by RTV to Genvoya plus DRV 800 mg once daily demonstrated high efficacy with this combination (i.e., 96.6% had maintained virologic suppression at 24 weeks), suggesting a lack of clinical significance of EVG/c and DRV drug interactions with this rarely used combination.[5]

- *Renal elimination:* Drugs that decrease renal function or compete for active tubular secretion could reduce clearance of tenofovir (TFV), in the form of tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) or tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), or emtricitabine (FTC). Concomitant use of nephrotoxic drugs should be avoided when using Genvoya or Stribild. COBI inhibits MATE1, which increases serum creatinine levels up to 0.4 mg/dL from baseline in adults. Creatinine-based calculations of estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) will be altered, but the actual glomerular filtration rate might be only minimally changed.[7] Significant increases in serum creatinine levels >0.4 mg/dL from baseline may represent renal toxicity and should be evaluated. People who experience a confirmed increase in serum creatinine levels should be closely monitored for renal toxicity; clinicians should monitor creatinine levels for further increases and perform a urinalysis to look for evidence of proteinuria or glycosuria.[2]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, flatulence
- *Less common (more severe):* Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported in people receiving nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, including TDF and FTC. TDF caused bone toxicity (osteomalacia and reduced bone mineral density [BMD]) in animals when given in high doses. Decreases in BMD have been reported in both adults and children who were taking TDF; the clinical significance of these changes is not yet known. Evidence of renal toxicity has been observed in people taking TAF or TDF, including a higher incidence of glycosuria, proteinuria, phosphaturia, and/or calciuria; increases in serum creatinine and blood urea nitrogen; and decreases in serum phosphate levels. Numerous case reports of renal tubular dysfunction have been reported in people receiving TAF or TDF; people at increased risk of renal dysfunction should be closely monitored if they are being treated with Genvoya or Stribild. This nephrotoxicity may be more pronounced in people with preexisting renal disease.[2] Although postmarketing cases of renal impairment have been reported with TAF, Genvoya, which contains TAF, has an improved bone and renal safety profile in children and adults when compared to Stribild, which contains TDF.[89]

Resistance

The International Antiviral Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV drug resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation. There is phenotypic cross-resistance between EVG and raltegravir (RAL).[10]

Pediatric Use

Approval

Genvoya (EVG/c/FTC/TAF) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in antiretroviral (ARV)-naive children and adolescents with HIV weighing ≥25 kg. It also can be used to replace the current ARV regimen in those who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Genvoya. Low-dose pediatric Genvoya (EVG 90 mg/c 90 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 6 mg) is approved by the European Medicines Agency for use in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg; however, this formulation is not approved by the FDA and is not available for clinical use in the United States.[11]

Stribild (EVG/c/FTC/TDF) is approved by the FDA as a complete regimen for use in children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg. It can also be used to replace the current ARV regimen in those who have been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) on a stable ARV regimen for at least 6 months with no history of treatment failure and no known mutations associated with resistance to the individual components of Stribild.[12]

Efficacy

Studies of EVG/c/FTC/TDF and EVG/c/FTC/TAF in children with HIV aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg have demonstrated 90% efficacy (as measured by virological suppression) similar to that seen in adults through 24 weeks and 48 weeks of study, respectively.[13,14]

EVG/c/FTC/TAF is FDA approved to treat children weighing ≥25 kg based on 24 weeks of data in 23 children.[15] In this study, all children who had been virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months were switched from their current regimens to EVG/c/FTC/TAF, and all participants maintained virological suppression (HIV-1 RNA <50 copies/mL) at Week 24.

A retrospective analysis of integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) use in children and adolescents showed that 83.7% (61/73) of participants on an EVG/c-containing therapy continued their prescribed regimen through the end of the study follow-up period (median 2.0 years of exposure, interquartile range [IQR] 1.4–2.7). Treatment interruption due to virologic failure occurred in 4.1% (3/73) of those on EVG/c, which was comparable to that of dolutegravir (DTG)-based regimens (3.7%) and lower than RAL-based regimens (17.3%). Two of the participants who experienced virologic failure with EVG had major INSTI drug-resistance mutations, but both attained virologic suppression after switching to regimens containing DRV or DRV with DTG.[16]

In a PK, safety, and efficacy study with a low-dose EVG 90 mg/c 90 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 6 mg tablet in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg, children had to be virologically suppressed (HIV RNA <50 copies/mL) for at least 6 months prior to switching to this regimen. Virologic suppression at <50 copies/mL (FDA Snapshot algorithm) was maintained by 26 of 27 (96%) participants at Weeks 24 and 48.[11,17] However, due to the significantly lower median observed EVG trough plasma concentrations in young children compared with the correlating efficacy values in adults, the efficacy of this fixed-dose formulation could not be extrapolated from adults to young children ≥2 years weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg.

Pharmacokinetics

EVG/c/FTC/TDF (Stribild)

The PK of EVG 150 mg/c 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TDF 300 mg tablet were evaluated in 14 treatment-naive adolescents with HIV who were between 12 years and <18 years of age and weighing ≥35 kg. EVG area under the plasma concentration versus time curve over the dosing interval (AUC_{tau}) and peak concentrations (C_{max}) were 30% higher (90% confidence interval [CI], 105% to 162%) and 42% higher (90% CI, 116% to 173%), respectively, in comparison to historical data in adults. EVG concentrations at the end of the dosing interval (C_{tau}) were 6% higher (90% CI, 70% to 160%) than in adults, and approximately ninefold higher than the protein-adjusted 95% inhibitory concentration ($PA\text{-}IC_{95}$) of 44.5 ng/mL for EVG. COBI, FTC, and TFV exposures were comparable to those measured in adults.[14]

EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya)

The PK of EVG 150 mg/c 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg tablet have been evaluated in adolescents aged 12 years to <18 years weighing ≥35 kg and aged children 6 years to <12 years weighing ≥25 kg.[15] AUC_{tau}, C_{max}, and C_{tau} for EVG, COBI, FTC, TAF, and TFV were comparable to or higher than those measured in adults with HIV in both cohorts (see Table A for EVG PK).

The PK of a low-dose FDC tablet containing EVG 90 mg/c 90 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 6 mg were evaluated in 27 children with HIV weighing ≥14 kg and <25 kg.[11] EVG and TAF AUC_{tau} and C_{max} were higher compared with historical data in adults receiving full-strength Genvoya (see Tables A for EVG PK). EVG C_{tau} was 21% lower (90% CI, 53% to 117%) in children versus adults but was approximately fourfold higher and ninefold higher than the $PA\text{-}IC_{95}$ and protein-adjusted 50% inhibitory concentration ($PA\text{-}IC_{50}$) for wild-type virus, respectively. Because C_{max} and AUC_{tau} were elevated but within the adult range, EVG exposures were considered adequate in the study. EVG C_{tau} in young children receiving a low-dose FDC EVG/c/FTC/TAF formulation was also lower than those previously measured in children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg on EVG at the 150-mg dose. COBI, FTC, and TFV exposures were all comparable to or higher than historical data in adults.

Table A. Pharmacokinetics of Elvitegravir Administered as EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya) in Children and Adolescents With HIV Between 2 Years and <18 Years of Age and Weighing ≥14 kg Compared With Adults

Drug	PK Parameter	Children **Aged ≥2 Years** and Weighing **≥14 to <25 kg**[11]	Children Aged 6 **Years** to **<12 Years and Weighing ≥25 kg** [15]	Adolescents **Aged 12 Years** to **<18 Years and Weighing ≥35 kg**[13]	Adults[a,13,15]	
		GLSM	Mean	Mean	Mean	GLSM
EVG	AUC_{tau} (ng·h/mL)	29,864	33,814	23,840	22,800	21,554
	C_{max} (ng/mL)	2,850	3,055	2,230	2,100	1,998
	C_{tau} (ng/mL)	195	370	301	290	248

[a] Adult EVG, COBI, and FTC pharmacokinetic parameters are from a Phase 2 study GS 102.

Key: AUC_{tau} = area under the plasma concentration versus time curve over the dosing interval; C_{max} = maximum observed plasma concentration of drug; C_{tau} = observed drug concentration at the end of the dosing interval; EVG = elvitegravir; GLSM = geometric least squares mean; PK = pharmacokinetic

Toxicity

In studies comparing EVG/c/FTC/TDF or EVG/c/FTC/TAF over 48 weeks in 1,733 adults, those receiving EVG/c/FTC/TAF had significantly smaller mean serum creatinine increases (0.08 vs. 0.12 mg/dL; *P* <0.0001), significantly less proteinuria (median percent change in protein −3% vs. +20%; *P* <0.0001), and a significantly smaller decrease in BMD at the spine (mean percent change −1.30% vs. −2.86%; *P* <0.0001) and hip (−0.66% vs. −2.95%; *P* <0.0001).[9] Larger increases in fasting lipid levels were observed with EVG/c/FTC/TAF than with EVG/c/FTC/TDF; the median increases in levels of total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and triglycerides were all higher in participants who received EVG/c/FTC/TAF.

In children and adolescents, EVG/c/FTC/TAF is generally preferred over EVG/c/FTC/TDF because of the lower risk of renal and bone toxicity with EVG/c/FTC/TAF compared with EVG/c/FTC/TDF (see the Tenofovir Alafenamide section). Long-term bone safety data through 96 weeks with EVG/c/FTC/TAF in adolescents weighing ≥35 kg showed no concerns for toxicity[17] in this age group based on BMD (median change from baseline spine BMD height-age [HA] z-score +0.14 and total body less head [TBLH] HA z-score of −0.07) and serum biomarkers of bone formation and resorption.[18]

In the approval study of EVG/c/FTC/TAF in children weighing ≥25 kg, no study discontinuations occurred due to medication toxicity. Long-term bone safety data with EVG/c/FTC/TAF through 96 weeks revealed no concerns for toxicity in this cohort based on BMD (median change from baseline spine BMD HA z-score of −0.2 and TBLH HA z-score of −0.32) and serum biomarkers of bone formation and resorption.[19] A concerning decline in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell counts was observed in all 23 children over the first 24 weeks of EVG/c/FTC/TAF treatment.[15] CD4 counts declined by a median of 130 cells/mm^3 (with a range of −472 cells/mm^3 to 266 cells/mm^3) from baseline. However, after enrolling additional children (for a total of 52 participants),[20] the median CD4 count decline at 48 weeks was 25 cells/mm^3 and at 96 weeks was 45 cells/mm^3. Additionally, the CD4 percentage did not significantly change across Weeks 24, 48, and 96.[19] The mechanism for

the reduction in CD4 count is unclear, and this reduction has only been reported in this study. Plasma exposures of all four drugs were higher in these children than the plasma exposures seen in historical data from adults, but no association was identified between plasma exposures of the four components of EVG/c/FTC/TAF and CD4 counts.[21]

In a PK, safety, and efficacy study with a low-dose EVG/c/FTC/TAF tablet in children aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg,[11] long-term bone safety data with the low-dose formulation through 48 weeks revealed no concerns for bone safety. Overall, lumbar spine (LS) and TBLH BMD increased relative to baseline during follow-up, while LS and TBLH height-for-age z-score–adjusted BMD z-scores remained relatively stable. Changes from baseline in median eGFR and body mass index z-score were small. The median absolute CD4 count decreased from 1,061 cells/mm^3 at baseline to 941 cells/mm^3 and 883 cells/mm^3 at Weeks 24 and 48, respectively. CD4 percentage remained stable (37.4% at baseline, 34.0% at Week 24, and 36.3% at Week 48). In a cumulative analysis of two pediatric cohorts (Cohort 2 aged 6 years to <12 years and weighing ≥25 kg and Cohort 3 aged ≥2 years and weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg) on EVG/c/FTC/TAF once daily for at least 48 weeks, the absolute lymphocyte counts and absolute CD4 counts decreased from baseline to Week 48 in both cohorts, with larger decreases in the younger cohort.[22] Median (IQR) absolute lymphocyte counts ($\times 10^3$ per µL) at baseline in Cohort 2 and Cohort 3 were 2.31 (range, 1.92–2.78) and 2.96 (range, 2.39–3.82), respectively. The absolute lymphocyte counts decreased during treatment (particularly in Cohort 3), with changes of −0.04 (range, −0.67 to 0.29) and −0.52 (range, −1.16 to 0.05) in Cohorts 2 and 3, respectively, at Week 48. Small decreases were seen in median absolute CD4 counts (cells/µL), with changes of −33 (IQR −194 to 80) and −187 (IQR −370 to 44) in Cohorts 2 and 3, respectively, at Week 48. However, the relative proportion of CD4 cells and the CD4:CD8 ratio remained stable during treatment. Overall, the decline in absolute CD4 counts mirrored known physiological fluctuations in young children and was mainly observed in those aged <6 years.[22]

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Raltegravir (RAL, Isentress)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: 400 mg (film-coated poloxamer tablet)

High-Dose (HD) Tablet: 600 mg (film-coated poloxamer tablet)

Chewable Tablets: 100 mg (scored) and 25 mg

Granules for Oral Suspension: Single-use packet of 100 mg of raltegravir, suspended in 10 mL of water for a final concentration of 10 mg/mL

Film-coated tablets, chewable tablets, and oral suspension are not interchangeable.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: No dosing information is available for preterm infants or infants weighing <2 kg at birth. See Table 13.1 Drug Dosing Recommendations for Antiretroviral Prophylaxis and Presumptive HIV Therapy in Infants With *In Utero* or Intrapartum Exposure to HIV for information about using raltegravir (RAL) for the prevention of perinatal HIV transmission.

Neonate **(Weighing ≥2 kg)** Dose[a,b]

RAL Oral Suspension Dosing Table for Full-Term Neonates **From Birth to Age 4 Weeks**

Neonates Aged ≥37 Weeks and Weighing ≥2 kg

Weight	Volume (Dose) of Suspension[b]
Birth to 1 **Week** of Age: Once-Daily Dosing	Approximately 1.5 **mg/kg** per Dose
2 kg to <3 kg	0.4 mL (4 mg) once daily
3 kg to <4 kg	0.5 mL (5 mg) once daily
4 kg to <5 kg	0.7 mL (7 mg) once daily
1–**4 Weeks** of Age: Twice-Daily Dosing	Approximately 3 **mg/kg** per Dose
2 kg to <3 kg	0.8 mL (8 mg) twice daily
3 kg to <4 kg	1 mL (10 mg) twice daily
4 kg to <5 kg	1.5 mL (15 mg) twice daily

Selected Adverse Events

- Rash, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome, hypersensitivity reaction, and toxic epidermal necrolysis
- Nausea, diarrhea
- Headache, dizziness, fatigue
- Insomnia
- Fever
- Creatine phosphokinase elevation, muscle weakness, and rhabdomyolysis

Special Instructions

- RAL can be given without regard to food.
- Coadministration or staggered administration of aluminum-containing and magnesium-containing antacids is not recommended with any RAL formulations.
- Significant drug interactions are more likely to occur when the RAL HD formulation is used once daily. The following drugs should not be coadministered with once-daily RAL HD dosing: calcium carbonate antacids, rifampin, tipranavir/ritonavir, and etravirine.
- Chewable tablets can be chewed, crushed (before administration), or swallowed whole.
- Film-coated tablets, including HD tablets, must be swallowed whole.

[a] RAL is metabolized by uridine diphosphate glucuronyl transferase (UGT) 1A1, and enzyme activity is low at birth; enzyme activity increases rapidly during the next 4 to 6 weeks of life.

[b] For neonates, most of the prepared oral suspension will be discarded. The volume for the required dose is much smaller than the 10 mL suspension that is prepared.

Note: If the birthing parent has taken RAL 2 to 24 hours prior to delivery, the neonate's first dose may be delayed until 24 to 48 hours after birth.

Infant >4 W**eeks of** Age and Child **(Weighing ≥3 kg to <20 kg)** Dose

- For children weighing 3 to 20 kg, either oral suspension or chewable tablets can be used.

RAL Oral Suspension Dosing Table for Patients Aged >4 **Weeks**[a]

Note: The maximum dose of oral suspension is 10 mL (RAL 100 mg) twice daily.

Weight	Twice-Daily Volume (Dose) of Suspension[b]
3 kg to <4 kg	2.5 mL (25 mg) twice daily
4 kg to <6 kg	3 mL (30 mg) twice daily
6 kg to <8 kg	4 mL (40 mg) twice daily
8 kg to <10 kg	6 mL (60 mg) twice daily
10 kg to <14 kg	8 mL (80 mg) twice daily
14 kg to <20 kg	10 mL (100 mg) twice daily

[a] The weight-based dose recommendation for the oral suspension is based on a dose of approximately RAL 6 mg/kg per dose twice daily.

[b] For neonates, most of the prepared oral suspension will be discarded, because the volume for the required dose is much smaller than 10 mL.

Child and Adolescent Dose for Chewable Tablets, Film-Coated Tablets, and HD Tablets

Children Weighing ≥3 kg

- Weighing <25 kg
  - Chewable tablets twice daily. See the table below for chewable tablet doses.
- Weighing ≥25 kg
  - RAL 400 mg, film-coated tablets twice daily or chewable tablets twice daily. See the table below for chewable tablet doses.

- The chewable tablets and oral suspension have better bioavailability than the film-coated tablets. Because the formulations are not interchangeable, do not substitute chewable tablets or oral suspension for film-coated tablets. See specific recommendations for proper dosing of different formulations.
- The chewable tablets should be stored in the original package with a desiccant to protect them from moisture.
- Instructions for preparing and administering the chewable tablet as a crushed tablet are as follows: Place the tablet(s) in a small, clean cup. For each tablet, add a teaspoon (~5 mL) of liquid (e.g., water, juice, or breast milk). Within 2 minutes, the tablet(s) will absorb the liquid and fall apart. Using a spoon, crush any remaining pieces of the tablet(s). Immediately administer the entire dose orally. If any portion of the dose is left in the cup, add another teaspoon (~5 mL) of liquid, swirl, and administer immediately.
- The chewable tablets contain phenylalanine, a component of aspartame. Phenylalanine can be harmful to patients with phenylketonuria, and the necessary dietary adjustments should be made in consultation with a metabolic specialist.
- The oral suspension comes in a kit that includes instructions for use, mixing cups, oral dosing syringes, and 60 foil packets. Detailed instructions for preparation are provided in the Instructions for Use document.[1] Each single-use foil packet contains 100 mg of RAL, which will be suspended in 10 mL of water for a final concentration of RAL 10 mg/mL. Gently swirl the mixing cup for 45 seconds in a circular motion to mix the powder into a uniform suspension.
- **Do not shake** the oral suspension. Dose should be administered within 30 minutes of mixing; unused solution should be discarded as directed in the Instructions for Use document. For neonates, most of the prepared oral suspension will be discarded, because the volume for the required dose is much smaller than 10 mL.

Metabolism/Elimination

- UGT1A1-mediated glucuronidation

RAL Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- No dose adjustment is necessary for patients with mild-to-moderate hepatic insufficiency who are receiving RAL twice daily.

Children and Adolescents Weighing ≥40 kg

- Two RAL 600-mg HD tablets (1,200 mg) once daily
- This dose is for antiretroviral therapy–naive or virologically suppressed patients who are on an initial dose of RAL 400 mg twice daily.

Chewable Tablet Dosing Table[a]

Note: The maximum dose of chewable tablets is RAL 300 mg twice daily.

Weight	Twice-Daily Dose	Number of Chewable Tablets
3 kg to <6 kg	RAL 25 mg	1 tablet (25 mg)
6 kg to <10 kg	RAL 50 mg	2 tablets (25 mg)
10 kg to <14 kg	RAL 75 mg	3 tablets (25 mg)
14 kg to <20 kg	RAL 100 mg	1 tablet (100 mg)
20 kg to <28 kg	RAL 150 mg	1½ tablets[b] (100 mg)
28 kg to <40 kg	RAL 200 mg	2 tablets (100 mg)
≥40 kg	RAL 300 mg	3 tablets (100 mg)

[a] The weight-based dose recommendation for the chewable tablet is based on a dose of approximately RAL 6 mg/kg per dose twice daily.

[b] The RAL 100-mg chewable tablet can be divided into equal halves.

- No studies have been conducted on the use of RAL HD in patients with hepatic impairment. Therefore, administering RAL HD is not recommended in patients with hepatic impairment.
- The effect of severe hepatic impairment on RAL pharmacokinetics has not been studied.

RAL Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- No dose adjustment is necessary in patients with any degree of renal impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* The major route of raltegravir (RAL) elimination is mediated through glucuronidation by uridine diphosphate glucuronyl transferase (UGT) 1A1.
- Coadministering RAL with inducers of UGT1A1—such as rifampin and tipranavir—may result in reduced plasma concentrations of RAL. Inhibitors of UGT1A1—such as atazanavir— may increase plasma concentrations of RAL. No dosing modifications are recommended when RAL is coadministered with atazanavir/ritonavir (ATV/r) or tipranavir/ritonavir (TPV/r). However, RAL high-dose (HD) tablets **should not be coadministered** with TPV/r.
- In adults, an increased dose of RAL is recommended when it is coadministered with rifampin. For adults receiving rifampin, the recommended RAL dose is 800 mg twice daily. **Do not coadminister** rifampin with once-daily RAL HD tablets. In children aged 4 weeks to <12 years who had tuberculosis (TB)/HIV coinfection and were taking rifampin, RAL 12 mg/kg per dose twice daily of the chewable tablet formulation safely achieved pharmacokinetic (PK) targets.[2,3] In a single case report of a 6-month-old infant receiving RAL oral granules for suspension and

rifampicin for TB prophylaxis, three to four times the currently recommended dose of 12 mg/kg twice daily was needed[4] to achieve target trough concentrations (C_{trough}) >0.022 mg/L.

- Aluminum-containing antacids and magnesium-containing antacids may reduce RAL plasma concentrations and **should not be coadministered** with RAL.
- Significant drug interactions may be more likely to occur with RAL HD once daily. C_{trough} in adults is approximately 30% lower with RAL HD 1,200 mg once daily than with RAL 400 mg twice daily. A lower C_{trough} increases the potential for clinically significant drug interactions with interfering drugs that decrease RAL exposure and further lower C_{trough}. In addition to aluminum-containing and magnesium-containing antacids, the following drugs **should not be coadministered** with the RAL HD formulation: calcium carbonate antacids, rifampin, TPV/r, and etravirine. The impact of other strong inducers of drug-metabolizing enzymes on RAL is unknown; coadministration with phenytoin, phenobarbital, and carbamazepine **is not recommended.**
- Before administering RAL, clinicians should carefully review a patient's medication profile for potential drug interactions with RAL.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, fatigue, itching, insomnia.
- *Less common:* Abdominal pain, vomiting. Patients with chronic active hepatitis B virus infection and/or hepatitis C virus infection are more likely to experience a worsening adverse events (AEs) grade from baseline for laboratory abnormalities of aspartate aminotransferase, alanine aminotransferase, or total bilirubin than patients who are not coinfected.
- *Rare:* Moderate-to-severe increase in creatine phosphokinase levels. Use RAL with caution in patients who are receiving medications that are associated with myopathy and rhabdomyolysis. Anxiety, depression, and paranoia, especially in those with a history of these conditions. Rash (including Stevens-Johnson syndrome), hypersensitivity reaction, DRESS (drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms),[5,6] and toxic epidermal necrolysis. Thrombocytopenia. Cerebellar ataxia. Hepatic failure (with and without associated hypersensitivity) in patients with underlying liver disease and/or concomitant medications.

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated HIV resistance mutations, and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

RAL is an integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) that is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs for the treatment of HIV in pediatric patients weighing ≥2 kg. The current pediatric FDA approval and dose recommendations are based on evaluations of 122 patients aged ≥4 weeks to 18 years who participated in IMPAACT P1066 and 42 full-term neonates who were treated for ≤6 weeks starting from birth and followed for a total of 24 weeks during IMPAACT P1110.[7]

The FDA has approved RAL HD, which allows once-daily dosing, for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥40 kg.

Efficacy in Clinical Trials

RAL has been evaluated in adults in three large randomized clinical trials: STARTMRK, SPRING-2, and AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) A5257. In these studies among treatment-naive adults, RAL was found to be effective with good tolerability when compared to efavirenz (STARTMRK), dolutegravir (DTG) (SPRING-2), and ATV/r or darunavir/ritonavir (ACTG5257).[8-12] The ONCEMRK study compared RAL 1,200 mg once daily (taken as two 600-mg RAL HD tablets) to RAL 400 mg twice daily in treatment-naive adults. Once-daily dosing with RAL 1,200 mg (taken as two 600-mg HD tablets) was found to be as effective as dosing with RAL 400 mg twice daily. Discontinuation rates due to AEs were not different between the two groups.[13] Once-daily dosing of RAL using the HD tablets was approved by the FDA for adults and children weighing ≥40 kg who are either treatment naive or virologically suppressed on a twice-daily 400-mg RAL regimen.

RAL was studied in infants, children, and adolescents in IMPAACT P1066, an open-label trial that evaluated PK, safety, tolerability, and efficacy. In 96 participants aged 2 to 18 years who were mostly antiretroviral therapy (ART) experienced, 79.1% of the patients achieved a favorable viral load response (i.e., viral loads <400 copies/mL or ≥1 $\log_{10}$ decline in viral load) while receiving the currently recommended dose of RAL. Infants and toddlers aged ≥4 weeks to <2 years also were enrolled in IMPAACT P1066 and received treatment with RAL oral suspension. At Weeks 24 and 48, 61% of the participants (14 of 23 infants and toddlers) had HIV viral loads[14-16] <400 copies/mL.

A systematic review of observational and clinical trials published on the effectiveness and safety of RAL and DTG for treating children and adolescents with HIV was conducted by the World Health Organization. The authors concluded that both medications are safe and effective as preferred regimens.[17]

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics of Once-Daily Dosing in Children and Adults

RAL PK exhibit considerable intrasubject and intersubject variability.[18,19] Current PK targets are based on results from a clinical trial in adults (QDMRK) in which treatment-naive patients with HIV were randomized to receive RAL 800 mg once daily or RAL 400 mg twice daily. After 48 weeks of treatment, the percent of patients who achieved HIV RNA viral loads <50 copies/mL was 83% in the once-daily group, compared with 89% in the twice-daily group. Patients in the once-daily arm with C_{trough} concentrations <45 nM (20 ng/mL) were at greater risk of experiencing treatment failure.[18,19] Overall drug exposures were similar in both groups, but the association between higher risk of treatment failure and lower C_{trough} concentrations suggests that maintaining RAL trough plasma concentrations >45 nM (20 ng/mL) is important for efficacy.[18,19]

The highest concentration (C_{max}) is approximately six times higher in patients receiving RAL 1,200 mg once daily than in those receiving RAL 400 mg twice daily, with a twofold higher area under the curve (AUC). Although modeling and simulations for pediatric patients indicate that PK targets are met using the once-daily RAL 1,200-mg dose, no clinical data exist on the use of this dose in children weighing <50 kg. Six children in IMPAACT P1066 had drug exposures that were similar to those observed in ONCEMRK, but all six children weighed >50 kg. Dose-related central nervous system toxicities—such as insomnia or hyperactivity—may occur in children who are exposed to very high concentrations of RAL.[7]

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics in Children

IMPAACT P1066 evaluated the PK, safety, and efficacy of RAL in treatment-experienced children aged 4 weeks to 18 years. A summary of RAL steady-state PK parameters, following administration of the recommended twice-daily doses (approximately 6 mg/kg twice daily), can be found in Table A below.[15,16]

Table A. Raltegravir Steady-State Pharmacokinetic Parameters in Pediatric Patients Following Administration of Recommended Twice-Daily Doses: IMPAACT P1066

Body Weight	Formulation	Dose	N[a]	Geometric Mean (% CV[b]) $AUC_{0–12h}$ (μM·h)[c,d]	Geometric Mean (% CV[b]) C_{12h} (nM)[c,d]
≥25 kg	Film-coated tablet	400 mg twice daily	18	14.1 (121%)	233 (157%)
≥25 kg	Chewable tablet	Weight-based dosing[e]	9	22.1 (36%)	113 (80%)
11 **kg to <25 kg**	Chewable tablet	Weight-based dosing[e]	13	18.6 (68%)	82 (123%)
3 **kg to <20 kg**	Oral suspension	Weight-based dosing[e]	19	24.5 (43%)	113 (69%)

[a] Number of patients with intensive PK results at the final recommended dose

[b] Geometric coefficient of variation

[c] Pharmacokinetic targets for film-coated tablets and chewable tablets: $AUC_{0–12h}$ 14–25 μM·h (6–11 mg·h/L); C_{12h} nM ≥33 nM (14.7 ng/mL)

[d] Pharmacokinetic targets for oral suspension: $AUC_{0–12h}$ 14–45 μM·h (6–20 mg·h/L); C_{12h} nM ≥75 nM (33.3 ng/mL)

[e] To approximate 6 mg/kg twice daily

Key: AUC = area under the curve; $AUC_{0–12h}$ = AUC from time zero to 12 hours after drug administration; C_{12h} = concentration at 12 hours (trough); CV = coefficient of variation

Children Aged 2 to 18 Years

IMPAACT P1066 was a Phase 1/2 open-label, multicenter study that evaluated the PK profile, safety, tolerability, and efficacy of various formulations of RAL in ART-experienced children and adolescents with HIV aged 2 to 18 years. RAL was administered in combination with an optimized background ARV regimen.[16,20] Participants received either the RAL 400-mg, film-coated tablet formulation twice daily (patients aged 6–18 years and weighing ≥25 kg) or the chewable tablet formulation at a dose of RAL 6 mg/kg twice daily (patients aged 2 years to <12 years). Doses were selected with the aim of achieving target PK parameters that were similar to those seen in adults (see Table A above).

A total of 126 treatment-experienced participants were enrolled, with 96 participants receiving the final recommended dose of RAL. Only treatment-experienced patients were eligible to enroll, and the optimized regimen was determined by the site investigators. Ninety-six participants completed 48 weeks of treatment. Seventy-nine percent of participants achieved HIV RNA <400 copies/mL, and 57% of participants achieved HIV RNA <50 copies/mL, with a mean CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count increase[16] of 156 cells/mm^3 (4.6%). Among 36 participants who experienced virologic failure, the development of drug resistance and/or poor adherence were contributing factors. Genotypic resistance data were available for 34 patients who experienced virologic failure, and RAL-associated mutations were detected in 12 out of 34 of those patients. The frequency, type, and

severity of AEs through Week 48 were comparable to those observed in adult studies. AEs were commonly reported, but few serious AEs were considered to be drug related. Patients with AEs that were considered to be drug related included one patient with Grade 3 psychomotor hyperactivity, abnormal behavior, and insomnia, as well as one patient with a Grade 2 allergic rash on Day 17 and Grade 3 ALT and Grade 4 AST laboratory elevations after Day 122. There were no discontinuations due to AEs and no drug-related deaths.[16] Overall, RAL was well tolerated when administered as a film-coated tablet twice daily in participants aged 6 years to <19 years and as chewable tablets at a dose of approximately 6 mg/kg twice daily in participants aged 2 years to <12 years, with favorable virologic and immunologic responses.[21]

Children Aged ≥4 Weeks to <2 Years

IMPAACT P1066 studied 26 infants and toddlers aged 4 weeks to <2 years who were administered the granules for RAL oral suspension in combination with an optimized background ARV regimen. All participants had previously received ARV drugs to prevent perinatal transmission and/or treat HIV, and 69% had baseline plasma HIV RNA exceeding 100,000 copies/mL.

By Week 48, two participants experienced AEs that were thought to be related to the study drug: one patient experienced a serious erythematous rash that resulted in permanent discontinuation of RAL, and one patient experienced immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome. Virologic success, defined as ≥1 $\log_{10}$ decline in HIV RNA or <400 copies/mL at 48 weeks, was achieved in >87% of participants. At 48 weeks of follow-up, 45.5% of participants had HIV RNA <50 copies/mL and a mean CD4 count increase of 527.6 cells/mm^3 (7.3%). Four participants in Cohort 4 experienced virologic failure by Week 48, and one participant had a RAL-associated resistance mutation. Overall, the granules for oral suspension, at a dose of approximately RAL 6 mg/kg twice daily, were well tolerated and had good efficacy.[15]

Long-Term Follow-Up in Children

The IMPAACT P1066 study team reported results regarding the safety and efficacy of different RAL formulations at 240 weeks in children enrolled in this multicenter trial.[22] Eligible participants were children aged 4 weeks to 18 years who had previously been treated with ART and who were experiencing virologic failure at the time of enrollment. RAL was added to an optimized ARV regimen in all participants. RAL was well tolerated, and few serious clinical or laboratory safety events were noted during the study.[22]

The proportion of participants who achieved virologic success at 240 weeks varied by the RAL formulation used: 19 of 43 children (44.2%) who received RAL 400-mg tablets; 24 of 31 children (77.4%) who received chewable tablets; and 13 of 15 children (86.7%) who received the oral granules for suspension. RAL resistance was documented in 19 of 50 patients (38%) who experienced virologic rebound after initial suppression. These results suggest that younger children with less treatment experience are more likely to have sustained virologic suppression, whereas older children with an extensive treatment history are more likely to experience treatment failure and develop resistance to RAL. Poor adherence among adolescents may have contributed to the lower efficacy observed in older children who received the RAL 400-mg tablets.[22]

Neonates Aged <4 Weeks

RAL is metabolized by UGT1A1, the same enzyme that is responsible for the elimination of bilirubin. UGT enzyme activity is low at birth, and RAL elimination is prolonged in neonates. Washout PKs of RAL in neonates born to pregnant women with HIV were studied in IMPAACT P1097.[23] The neonatal plasma half-life of RAL was highly variable, ranging from 9.3 to 184 hours. This suggests that neonatal development may impact UGT1A1 enzyme activity, redistribution, and/or enterohepatic recirculation of RAL. RAL competes with unconjugated bilirubin for albumin binding sites. When RAL plasma concentrations are extremely high, unconjugated bilirubin may be displaced from albumin by RAL and cross the blood–brain barrier, leading to bilirubin-induced neurologic dysfunction. The effect of RAL on neonatal bilirubin binding is unlikely to be clinically significant, unless concentrations that are 50-fold to 100-fold higher than typical peak concentrations are reached (approximately 5,000 ng/mL).[24]

IMPAACT P1110 was a Phase 1 multicenter trial that enrolled full-term neonates with or without *in utero* RAL exposure at risk of acquiring HIV. RAL-exposed neonates were those whose mothers received RAL within 2 to 24 hours of delivery. For RAL-exposed neonates, the initial dose of RAL was delayed until 12 to 60 hours after delivery. The study design included two cohorts: Cohort 1 infants received two RAL doses that were administered 1 week apart, and Cohort 2 infants received daily RAL doses for the first 6 weeks of life. PK data from Cohort 1 and from older infants and children were combined in a population PK model, and simulations were used to select the following RAL dosing regimen for evaluation in infants in Cohort 2: RAL 1.5 mg/kg daily, starting within 48 hours of life and continuing through Day 7; RAL 3 mg/kg twice daily on Days 8 to 28 of life; and RAL 6 mg/kg twice daily after 4 weeks of age.[25] Protocol exposure targets for each participant were AUC from time zero to 24 hours after drug administration ($AUC_{0–24hr}$) 12 mg·h/L to 40 mg·h/L, $AUC_{0–12hr}$ 6 mg·h/L to 20 mg·h/L, and C_{12h} or C_{24h} >33 ng/mL. Safety was assessed using clinical and laboratory evaluations.[23,26,27]

Twenty-six RAL-naive infants and 10 RAL-exposed infants were enrolled in Cohort 2; 25 RAL-naive infants and 10 RAL-exposed infants had evaluable PK results and safety data. Results for the RAL-naive infants and RAL-exposed infants who were enrolled in Cohort 2 are contained in Table B below.[27]

Table B. Raltegravir Pharmacokinetic Parameters for Raltegravir-Naive and Raltegravir-Exposed Neonates

PK Parameter	Initial Dose: **RAL 1.5 mg/kg** Once Daily RAL-Naive **(n = 25)**[d]	Initial Dose: **RAL 1.5 mg/kg** Once Daily RAL-Exposed **(n = 10)**	Days 15–18: **RAL 3.0 mg/kg** Twice Daily RAL-Naive **(n = 24)**[e]	Days 15–18: **RAL 3.0 mg/kg** Twice Daily RAL-Exposed **(n = 10)**[f]
	GM (CV%)	GM (CV%)	GM (CV%)	GM (CV%)
$AUC_{0–24h}$ (mg·h/L)[a]	38.2 (42.0%)	42.9 (25.3%)	—	—
$AUC_{0–12h}$ (mg·h/L)	—	—	14.3 (49.5%)	18.3 (62.8%)
C_{trough} (ng/mL)[b]	948 (84.0%)	946 (74.0%)	176 (162.1%)	274 (176.4%)
C_{max} (ng/mL)[c]	2,350 (36.5%)	2,565 (23.1%)	2,849 (47.5%)	3,667 (46.3%)
T_{max} (hours)	5.4 (71.5%)	3.8 (88.8%)	2.3 (77.1%)	1.9 (52.3%)
$T_{1/2}$ (hours)	15.8 (101.4%)	14.4 (69.5%)	2.5 (34.1%)	2.9 (20.7%)

[a] AUC targets: $AUC_{0–24h}$ 12–40 mg·h/L and $AUC_{0–12h}$ 6–20 mg·h/L.

[b] C_{trough} concentration >33 ng/mL. For initial dose, the last measurable plasma concentration collected at 24 hours was used. For Days 15–18, C_{12h} was estimated when the 12–hour postdose sample was collected earlier than 12 hours after dosing (the protocol specified a sample collection time of 8–12 hours postdose).

[c] C_{max} <8,724 ng/mL

[d] $AUC_{0–24h}$ could not be estimated for one infant.

[e] $AUC_{0–12h}$ and C_{trough} could not be estimated for one infant with delayed absorption.

[f] $AUC_{0–12h}$ and C_{max} could not be estimated for one infant with incomplete sample collection.

Key: AUC = area under the curve; $AUC_{0–12h}$ = AUC from time zero to 12 hours after drug administration; $AUC_{0–24h}$ = AUC from time zero to 24 hours after drug administration; C_{max} = maximum concentration; C_{trough} = trough concentration; CV = coefficient of variation; GM = geometric mean; PK = pharmacokinetic; RAL = raltegravir; $T_{1/2}$ = half-life; T_{max} = time to reach maximum concentration

Daily RAL was safe and well tolerated during the first 6 weeks of life. Infants were treated for up to 6 weeks from birth and followed for a total of 24 weeks. All GM protocol exposure targets were met. In some infants, $AUC_{0–24h}$ following the initial dose was slightly above the target range, but this is considered acceptable given the rapid increase in RAL metabolism during the first week of life. The PK targets and the safety guidelines were met for both RAL-naive and RAL-exposed infants in Cohort 2 using the specified dosing regimen. No drug-related clinical AEs were observed. Three laboratory AEs were reported among the RAL-naive infants: Grade 4 transient neutropenia occurred in one infant who received a zidovudine-containing regimen; two bilirubin elevations (one Grade 1 and one Grade 2) were considered nonserious and did not require specific therapy.[7] Among the RAL-exposed infants, four infants exhibited Grade 3 or 4 toxicities: anemia in one infant, neutropenia in one infant, and hyperbilirubinemia in two infants. No specific therapy was required to treat these toxicities, and no infants required phototherapy or exchange transfusion for hyperbilirubinemia.

Results from IMPAACT P1110 confirmed the PK modeling and simulation submitted for FDA approval and labeling. Neonates born to mothers who received RAL 2 to 24 hours prior to delivery

should have their first dose of RAL delayed until 24 to 48 hours after birth.[26,27] The timing of administration of the initial dose of RAL to infants perinatally exposed to DTG- or bictegravir (BIC)-containing regimens has not been studied. In a single case report of a neonate born to a mother receiving an intensified regimen of DTG 50 mg twice daily for viremia close to the time of delivery, prolonged neonatal DTG concentrations were observed.[28] These findings suggest that a similar delay in the first dose of RAL until 24 to 48 hours after birth may be indicated in neonates born to patients receiving an INSTI-containing oral regimen to avoid potential toxicity. Results of the ongoing studies, IMPAACT 2023 (DTG neonatal PK and safety study) and IMPAACT 2026 (washout PK in infants born to mothers receiving BIC), may provide PK data that can inform future recommendations.

The current RAL dosing regimen with two dose changes in the first month of life may be challenging for some families. To simplify medication teaching and minimize dosing changes, some experts increase to the 3 mg/kg twice-daily dose on Day 4 or 5 of life. Because many infants receiving RAL as part of presumptive HIV therapy will have a longer hospital stay following birth by cesarean section, this dosing change can generally be made at the time of hospital discharge.

RAL can be safely administered to full-term infants using the daily dosing regimen that was studied in IMPAACT P1110. This regimen **is not recommended** for use in preterm infants. A population PK analysis incorporating RAL PK data from term and preterm neonates suggests slower RAL elimination in preterm infants, and use of the term neonate RAL dosing regimen in preterm neonates may result in elevated and potentially dangerous RAL plasma concentrations.[25] When RAL plasma concentrations are extremely high, unconjugated bilirubin may be displaced from albumin by RAL and cross the blood–brain barrier, leading to bilirubin-induced neurologic dysfunction (BIND). Preterm infants have impaired bilirubin-albumin binding and are at higher risk of BIND.[29] Clinical assays to measure unbound, unconjugated bilirubin are not routinely available, and therefore, it is not always possible to assess the risk of BIND in a preterm infant if RAL or other INSTIs were administered.

Two case reports of preterm infants who received RAL to prevent perinatal transmission have been published.[30,31] These case reports involved one infant born at a gestational age of 24 weeks and 6 days who weighed 800 g and another infant born at 33 weeks gestation who weighed 1,910 g. In both infants, intermittent dosing of RAL was done using real-time therapeutic drug monitoring in the neonatal intensive care unit.[30,31] Less-frequent dosing was required because RAL elimination was significantly delayed in these preterm infants. RAL PKs and safety must be studied in preterm infants before RAL can be safely used without real-time PK monitoring in this population. An accidental overdose was reported in a full-term neonate because of incorrect preparation of the RAL oral granules for suspension.[32] For neonates, since the volume for the required dose is much smaller than the 10 mL reconstitution volume, most of the prepared oral suspension will be discarded. Clear documentation of caregiver instruction on dose preparation by clinical staff is critical.

Formulations

The PK of RAL in adult patients with HIV who swallowed intact 400-mg tablets were compared with those observed in patients who chewed the 400-mg, film-coated tablets because of swallowing difficulties. Drug absorption was significantly higher among patients who chewed the tablets, although the palatability was rated as poor.[33] In adult volunteers, the PK of RAL 800 mg taken once daily by chewing was compared with the PK of two doses of RAL 400 mg taken every 12 hours by swallowing. Participants who took RAL by chewing had significantly higher drug exposure and

reduced PK variability than those who swallowed whole tablets according to current recommendations.[34] According to the manufacturer, the film-coated tablets must be swallowed whole.

The RAL chewable tablet and oral suspension have higher oral bioavailability than the 400-mg, film-coated tablet, according to a comparative study in healthy adult volunteers.[35] Compared with the RAL 400-mg tablet formulation, the RAL 600-mg tablet has higher relative bioavailability.[7,36] Interpatient and intrapatient variability for PK parameters of RAL are considerable, especially with the film-coated tablets.[7,37] Because of differences in the bioavailability of various formulations, the dosing recommendations for each formulation differ, and the formulations **are not interchangeable.** When prescribing RAL, clinicians should refer to the appropriate dosing table for the chosen formulation. The use of RAL chewable tablets as dispersible tablets in children aged <2 years has been studied in IMPAACT P1101 for infants and toddlers with TB/HIV coinfection who received rifampin as part of their TB treatment. The use of RAL chewable tablets dispersed in water at a dose of RAL 12 mg/kg per dose twice daily safely achieved PK targets.[2,38] The RAL chewable tablets are now approved for use in infants and young children 4 weeks of age and older and weighing at least 2 kg.[39] An *in vitro* evaluation demonstrated that the chewable tablets are stable in various liquids, including water, apple juice, and breast milk.[39] The chewable tablets may be crushed and mixed with a small amount of liquid to facilitate administration (see Special Instructions above).

Palatability was evaluated as part of IMPAACT P1066. Both chewable tablets and oral granules for suspension were thought to have acceptable palatability. Seventy-three percent of those surveyed reported no problems with chewable tablets; 82.6% reported no problems with administering the oral granules.[15,16] The acceptability and feasibility of administering RAL granules for oral suspension in a low-resource setting have been studied in clinics in South Africa and Zimbabwe. With proper training by health care personnel, caregivers were able to prepare the suspension safely and accurately.[40,41]

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Pharmacokinetic Enhancers

Cobicistat (COBI, Tybost)

Ritonavir (RTV, Norvir)

Cobicistat (COBI, Tybost)

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Formulations

Tablet: 150 mg, 90 mg

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Tablets

- [Evotaz] Atazanavir 300 mg/cobicistat 150 mg
- [Genvoya] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg
- [Prezcobix] Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg (pediatric dose for children ≥40 kg)
- [Prezcobix] Darunavir 675 mg/cobicistat 150 mg (pediatric dose for children 25 kg to 40 kg)
- [Stribild] Elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg
- [Symtuza] Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/ tenofovir alafenamide 10 mg

When using FDC tablets, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Cobicistat (COBI) Is a Pharmacokinetic (PK) Enhancer

- The only use of COBI is as a PK enhancer (boosting agent) for certain protease inhibitors (PIs) and integrase strand transfer inhibitors. COBI **is not interchangeable** with ritonavir (RTV) and has no antiviral activity.

Child (Weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg)

- COBI 90 mg with atazanavir (ATV) 200 mg

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg to <35 kg)

- COBI 150 mg with ATV 200 mg

Child (Weighing ≥15 kg to <25 kg)

- COBI 90 mg with darunavir (DRV) 600 mg

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg to <30 kg)

- COBI 150 mg with DRV 600 mg

Selected Adverse Events

- COBI is an inhibitor of renal tubular transporters of creatinine. This increases serum creatinine and reduces the estimated glomerular filtration rate, with no change in glomerular function.

Special Instructions

- COBI 150 mg **is not interchangeable** with RTV, but it has a PK-boosting effect that is comparable to RTV 100 mg.
- Drug interactions may differ between RTV and COBI, because COBI is a stronger P-glycoprotein inhibitor and lacks some of the induction effects of RTV.
- **Do not administer** COBI with RTV or with FDC tablets that contain COBI.
- COBI **is not recommended** for use with more than one ARV drug that requires PK enhancement (e.g., EVG used in combination with a PI).
- Using COBI with PIs other than once-daily ATV or DRV **is not recommended**.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥30 kg to <40 kg)

- COBI 150 mg with DRV 675 mg

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- COBI 150 mg with atazanavir (ATV) 300 mg administered at the same time with food

Child and Adolescent **(Weighing ≥40** kg) and Adult Dose

- COBI 150 mg with darunavir (DRV) 800 mg administered at the same time with food

[Evotaz] ATV/COBI

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food
- Use in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.

[Genvoya] Elvitegravir (EVG)/COBI/Emtricitabine (FTC)/ Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF)

Child (Weighing ≥14 to <25 kg)

- Limited data currently exist on the appropriate dose of Genvoya in children weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg. Studies are currently being conducted to assess the safety and efficacy of a low-dose tablet with EVG 90 mg/COBI 90 mg/ FTC 120 mg/TAF 6 mg.

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg) and Adult Dose

- One tablet once daily with food

[Prezcobix] DRV/COBI

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥25 kg and ≤40 kg)

- Darunavir 675 mg/cobicistat 150 mg
- One tablet once daily with food
- Use in combination with other ARV drugs

Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose

- Darunavir 800 mg/cobicistat 150 mg
- One tablet once daily with food
- Use in combination with other ARV drugs.

Note: The latest FDA label for COBI includes additional recommended dosing for children weighing ≥25 kg to <30 kg (See Cobicistat dosing recommendations above).

- Patients with a confirmed increase in serum creatinine >0.4 mg/dL from baseline should be closely monitored for renal safety.
- When using COBI in combination with TDF, monitor serum creatinine, urine protein, and urine glucose at baseline and every 3 to 6 months while the patient is receiving therapy (see Table 17i. Nephrotoxic Effects). In patients who are at risk of renal impairment, serum phosphate also should be monitored.
- For information on crushing and cutting tablets, see Information on Crushing and Liquid Drug Formulations from Toronto General Hospital.

Metabolism/Elimination

- COBI is a strong inhibitor of cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and a weak inhibitor of CYP2D6.

COBI Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment

- COBI does not require dose adjustment in patients with mild-to-moderate hepatic impairment. No data are available in patients with severe hepatic impairment. Dosing recommendations for medications that are coadministered with COBI should be followed.
- Genvoya, Prezcobix, Stribild, and Symtuza **are not recommended** in patients with severe hepatic impairment.
- Evotaz **is not recommended** in patients with any degree of hepatic impairment.

COBI Dosing in Patients With Renal Impairment

- COBI does not require a dose adjustment in patients with renal impairment, including those with severe renal impairment. Dosing recommendations for medications that are coadministered with COBI should be followed.
- The use of COBI plus TDF **is not recommended** in patients with creatinine clearance (CrCl) <70 mL/min. Dose adjustments for TDF are required for patients with CrCl <50 mL/min, and the necessary dose adjustments for TDF when this drug is used with COBI have not been established in this group of patients.
- Genvoya **is not recommended** in patients with estimated CrCl 15 to <30 mL/min, or in patients with estimated CrCl <15 mL/min who are not receiving chronic hemodialysis.

[Stribild] EVG/COBI/FTC/Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (TDF) *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥35 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with food • The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends using Stribild only in patients with sexual maturity ratings of 4 or 5. [Symtuza] DRV/COBI/FTC/TAF *Child and Adolescent (Weighing ≥40 kg) and Adult Dose* • One tablet once daily with food	• Stribild **should not be initiated** in patients with estimated CrCl <70 mL/min and should be discontinued in patients with estimated CrCl <50 mL/min. The dose adjustments required for FTC and TDF in these patients cannot be achieved with an FDC tablet. • Symtuza **is not recommended** in patients with estimated CrCl <30 mL/min.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Metabolism of cobicistat (COBI) is mainly via cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A4 and, to a lesser degree, CYP2D6. COBI is a strong inhibitor of CYP3A4 and a weak inhibitor of CYP2D6. COBI also inhibits breast cancer resistance protein, P-glycoprotein (P-gp), the organic anion transporting polypeptides organic anion transporting polypeptide (OATP) 1B1 and OATP1B3, and multidrug and toxin extrusion 1. Unlike ritonavir, COBI does not demonstrate any enzyme-inducing effects. The potential exists for multiple drug interactions when using COBI. Before COBI is administered, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential interactions and overlapping toxicities with other drugs. Coadministration of medications that induce or inhibit CYP3A4 may respectively decrease or increase exposures of COBI and coformulated antiretroviral (ARV) medications. Coadministration of medications that are CYP3A4 substrates may result in clinically significant adverse reactions that are severe, life-threatening, or fatal, or may result in loss of therapeutic effect if dependent on conversion to an active metabolite due to CYP3A4 inhibition by COBI.[1]
- *Nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors:* COBI is a strong P-gp inhibitor; thus, a dose of tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) 10 mg combined with COBI produces tenofovir (TFV) exposures that are similar to those produced by TAF 25 mg without COBI.[2] COBI increases plasma TFV exposures by 23% when it is coadministered with TDF; thus, renal safety should be monitored in patients who are receiving this combination.[1,3]
- *Non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors:* Efavirenz, etravirine, and nevirapine **should not be used** with COBI.
- *Protease inhibitors:* Using COBI as a dual booster for elvitegravir (EVG) and darunavir (DRV) has been studied in people with and without HIV, and the evidence is conflicting. When EVG plus COBI plus DRV was administered to people without HIV, the trough concentration (C_{trough}) of EVG was 50% lower than the C_{trough} seen in people who received elvitegravir/cobicistat (EVG/c)/emtricitabine (FTC)/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) without DRV.[4] When EVG/c/FTC/TAF was administered with DRV to patients with HIV, both DRV and EVG concentrations were comparable to those seen in historic controls[5,6]

- *Integrase inhibitors:* In one small study, dolutegravir (DTG) C_{trough} was 107% higher when DTG was administered with darunavir/cobicistat (DRV/c) than when it was administered with darunavir/ritonavir.[7] Bictegravir (BIC) area under the curve increases 74% when BIC is administered with DRV/c.[8]
- *Corticosteroids:* Increased serum concentrations of corticosteroids can occur when corticosteroids and COBI are coadministered; this can lead to clinically significant adrenal suppression. Adrenal suppression occurs regardless of whether the corticosteroids are administered orally or by some other route (e.g., intranasal, inhaled, interlaminar, intraarticular) and regardless of whether the corticosteroids are administered routinely or intermittently. A possible exception is beclomethasone, which appears to be a relatively safe option with inhaled or intranasal administration.[9,10]

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, anorexia
- *Less common (more severe):* New onset renal impairment or worsening of renal impairment when used with TAF or TDF, rhabdomyolysis, increased amylase and lipase levels
- *Case Report:* One case report exists of a woman with low body weight (36 kg) and declining renal function who developed severe Type B lactic acidosis while on the combination of COBI, DRV, and non–dose-adjusted TDF/FTC. The woman's TFV C_{trough} during this episode was found to be up to fivefold higher than trough values reported in adults with normal renal function. The woman's FTC concentration was not measured.[11]

Resistance

Not applicable because COBI has no antiviral activity.

Pediatric Use

Approval

COBI is a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer of ARV drugs that is available as a single agent or a component of fixed-dose combination products. COBI, as a component of Stribild, is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at the adult dose for use in children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg.[12] The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV recommends limiting the use of Stribild to those with a sexual maturity rating of 4 or 5. COBI, as a component of Genvoya, is approved by the FDA at the adult dose for use in children weighing ≥25 kg.[13] The FDA has not approved COBI as a component of Genvoya for use in children weighing <25 kg, but an ongoing PK, safety, and efficacy study is underway with a low-dose tablet in children weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg (see the Elvitegravir section). COBI alone (as Tybost) is approved by the FDA for use in children weighing ≥14 kg when used in combination with ATV, and in children weighing ≥15 kg when used in combination with DRV.[1] COBI, coformulated with ATV (as Evotaz),[14] is approved by the FDA at the adult dose for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg. COBI, coformulated with DRV (as Prezcobix)[15] and as a component of Symtuza,[16] is approved by the FDA in children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg. COBI, as a component of Symtuza, is approved by the FDA at the adult dose in children and adolescents weighing ≥40 kg.

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Ritonavir (RTV, Norvir)

Updated: September 30, 2025
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Formulations

Oral Powder: 100 mg per packet

Tablet: 100 mg

Generic Formulation

- 100-mg tablet

Fixed-Dose Combination (FDC) Solution

- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 80 mg/ritonavir 20 mg/mL. Oral solution contains 42.4% (volume per volume) ethanol and 15.3% (weight per volume) propylene glycol.

FDC Tablets

- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 100 mg/ritonavir 25 mg
- [Kaletra] Lopinavir 200 mg/ritonavir 50 mg

When using FDC tablets or solution, refer to other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the individual components of the FDC. See also Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents.

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA or DailyMed.

Dosing Recommendations

Ritonavir (RTV) as a Pharmacokinetic Enhancer

- RTV is used as a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer of other protease inhibitors (PIs). The recommended dose of RTV varies and is specific to the drug combination selected. See other sections of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information about the recommended doses of RTV to use with specific PIs. RTV has antiviral activity, but it is not used as an antiviral agent; instead, it is used as a PK enhancer of other PIs.

Formulation Considerations

- RTV oral powder should be used only for dosing increments of 100 mg and cannot be used for doses <100 mg.

[Kaletra] Lopinavir/RTV

Infant, Child, Adolescent, and Adult Dose

- See the Lopinavir/Ritonavir section of Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for information.

Selected Adverse Events

- Gastrointestinal (GI) intolerance, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Hyperlipidemia, especially hypertriglyceridemia
- Hepatitis
- Hyperglycemia
- Fat maldistribution

Special Instructions

- Administer RTV with food to increase absorption and reduce the likelihood and severity of GI adverse events.
- **Do not administer** RTV with cobicistat (COBI) or drugs that contain COBI (i.e., Evotaz, Genvoya, Prezcobix, Stribild, Symtuza).

	• RTV oral powder should be mixed with a soft food (e.g., applesauce, vanilla pudding) or a liquid (e.g., water, chocolate milk, infant formula) to help mitigate the bitter taste. Administer or discard the mixture within 2 hours of mixing. To Increase Tolerability of RTV Oral Powder in Children • Mix the powder with milk, chocolate milk, ice cream, or vanilla or chocolate pudding. • Before administering RTV, give a child ice chips, an ice pop, or spoonfuls of partially frozen orange or grape juice concentrate to dull the taste buds. Another option is to give a nonallergic child peanut butter or hazelnut chocolate spread to coat the mouth.[1] • After administration, give foods with strong tastes (e.g., maple syrup, cheese). • Check a child's food allergy history before making these recommendations. • Counsel caregivers or patients that the bad taste will not be completely masked.
	Metabolism/Elimination
	• Cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A and CYP2D6 inhibitor; CYP1A2, CYP2B6, CYP2C9, CYP2C19, and glucuronidation inducer. RTV inhibits the intestinal transporter P-glycoprotein. RTV Dosing in Patients With Hepatic Impairment • RTV is primarily metabolized by the liver. • No dose adjustment is necessary in patients with mild or moderate hepatic impairment. • No data exist on RTV dosing for adult or pediatric patients with severe hepatic impairment. Use caution when administering RTV to patients with moderate-to-severe hepatic impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Ritonavir (RTV) is extensively metabolized by (and is one of the most potent inhibitors of) hepatic cytochrome P450 (CYP) 3A. Also, RTV is a CYP2D6 inhibitor and a CYP1A2, CYP2B6, CYP2C9, CYP2C19, and glucuronidation inducer. RTV inhibits the intestinal transporter P-glycoprotein. There is potential for multiple drug interactions with RTV.

- Before RTV is administered, a patient's medication profile should be reviewed carefully for potential interactions with RTV and overlapping toxicities with other drugs.
- RTV and cobicistat **are not interchangeable.** The potential drug interactions for these drugs are different.[2]
- Avoid concomitant use of corticosteroids, including intranasal or inhaled fluticasone or inhaled budesonide. Reduced elimination of steroids can increase steroid effects, leading to adrenal insufficiency.[3,4] Use caution when prescribing RTV with other inhaled steroids. Limited data suggest that beclomethasone may be a suitable alternative to fluticasone when a patient who is taking RTV requires an inhaled or intranasal corticosteroid.[5,6] Iatrogenic Cushing's syndrome and suppression of the hypothalamic-pituitary axis secondary to the drug interaction between RTV and local injection of triamcinolone has occurred.[7,8] See Table 24a. Drug Interactions Between Protease Inhibitors and Other Drugs in the Adult and Adolescent Antiretroviral Guidelines for additional information.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, abdominal pain, anorexia, circumoral paresthesia, abnormal lipid levels
- *Less common (more severe):* Exacerbation of chronic liver disease, fat maldistribution
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in hemophiliacs, pancreatitis. Cases of hepatitis, including life-threatening cases, have been reported. Allergic reactions, including bronchospasm, urticaria, and angioedema have occurred. Toxic epidermal necrolysis and Stevens-Johnson syndrome have occurred.[9]

Resistance

Resistance to RTV is not clinically relevant when the drug is used as a pharmacokinetic (PK) enhancer of other antiretroviral (ARV) medications.

Pediatric Use

Approval

RTV has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in the pediatric population.

Effectiveness in Practice

Use of RTV as the sole protease inhibitor (PI) in ARV therapy in children **is not recommended.** In both children and adults, RTV is recommended as a PK enhancer for use with other PIs. RTV is a CYP3A inhibitor and functions as a PK enhancer by slowing the metabolism of the PI.

Dosing

Dosing regimens for RTV-boosted darunavir and atazanavir, as well as coformulated lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r) are available for pediatric patients. See the Darunavir, Atazanavir, and Lopinavir/Ritonavir sections for specific guidance. For more information about individual PIs, see other sections of Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information. RTV oral solution is no longer available.

Toxicity

Full-dose RTV has been shown to prolong the PR interval in a study of healthy adults who were given RTV 400 mg twice daily.[9] Potentially life-threatening arrhythmias have been reported in premature infants who were treated with LPV/r; therefore, the use of LPV/r is generally not recommended before a gestational age of 42 weeks (see the Lopinavir/Ritonavir section).[10,11] Coadministration of RTV with other drugs that prolong the PR interval (e.g., macrolides, quinolones, methadone) should be undertaken with caution because it is unknown how coadministering any of these drugs with RTV will affect the PR interval. In addition, RTV should be used with caution in patients who may be at increased risk of developing cardiac conduction abnormalities, such as patients who have underlying structural heart disease, conduction system abnormalities, ischemic heart disease, or cardiomyopathy.

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Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Fixed-Dose Combinations

Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class

Updated: September 30, 2025
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Brand Name	NRTIs						NNRTIs			INSTIs				PIs			PK Enhancers	
	ABC	3TC	ZDV	FTC	TDF	TAF[a]	DOR	EFV	RPV[b]	BIC[a]	CAB[b]	DTG	EVG[a]	ATV	DRV	LPV[c]	COBI	RTV
NRTI																		
Cimduo		X			X													
Combivir[d]		X	X															
Descovy				X		X												
Epzicom[d]	X	X																
Temixys		X			X													
Truvada				X	X													
NRTI/NNRTI																		
Atripla[d]				X	X			X										
Complera				X	X				X									
Delstrigo		X			X		X											
Odefsey				X		X			X									
Symfi or Symfi Lo[d]		X			X			X										
NRTI/INSTI																		
Biktarvy				X		X				X								
Dovato		X										X						
Triumeq	X	X										X						

Appendix A, Table 1. Antiretrovirals Available in Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets or as a Co-packaged Formulation, by Drug Class

Brand Name	NRTIs						NNRTIs			INSTIs				PIs			PK Enhancers	
	ABC	3TC	ZDV	FTC	TDF	TAF[a]	DOR	EFV	RPV[b]	BIC[a]	CAB[b]	DTG	EVG[a]	ATV	DRV	LPV[c]	COBI	RTV
Triumeq PD	X	X										X						
NNRTI/INSTI																		
Juluca									X			X						
Cabenuva									X		X							
NRTI/INSTI/COBI																		
Genvoya				X		X							X				X	
Stribild				X	X								X				X	
NRTI/PI/COBI																		
Symtuza				X		X									X		X	
PI/COBI																		
Evotaz														X			X	
Prezcobix															X		X	
PI/RTV																		
Kaletra																X		X

[a] TAF, BIC, and EVG are only available in FDC tablets. However, TAF 25 mg tablets (Vemlidy) are FDA approved for treatment of HBV. In select circumstances, TAF might be used as one component of a combination ARV regimen, with dosing recommendations similar to those for Descovy.

[b] CAB and RPV for intramuscular injection are available as a co-packaged product (Cabenuva); oral formulations of CAB and RPV for initial lead-in dosing must be prescribed separately; see Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine.

[c] LPV is only available in FDC tablets or solution.

[d] Brand name product is no longer available.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ARV = antiretroviral; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; CAB = cabotegravir; COBI = cobicistat; DOR = doravirine; DRV = darunavir; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; EVG = elvitegravir; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; FDC = fixed-dose combination; FTC = emtricitabine; HBV = hepatitis B virus; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV = lopinavir; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside and nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; PK = pharmacokinetic; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ZDV = zidovudine

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

Updated: September 30, 2025
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General Considerations When Using Fixed-Dose Combination Products

Please see the individual drug sections under Appendix A. Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information for the recommended dosing of individual fixed-dose combination (FDC) products.

FDC tablets and individual antiretroviral (ARV) drugs also can be looked up by drug name (brand name and generic) at DailyMed. Size is listed under the Ingredients and Appearance section.

For images of most of the FDC tablets listed in this table, see the Antiretroviral Medications section of the National HIV Curriculum. In addition, a resource from the United Kingdom illustrates the relative sizes of FDC tablets and individual ARV drugs (see the ARV Chart at HIV i-BASE). Although most of the drugs listed in the chart are the same as those in the United States, there are several differences: some formulations available in the United States are not included; a few of the brand names are not the same as those listed in Appendix A, Table 2; and the chart includes a formulation that is not available in the United States.

Integrase Strand Transfer Inhibitors

- Bictegravir (BIC) and dolutegravir (DTG), second-generation integrase strand transfer inhibitors (INSTIs), have a higher barrier to resistance than the first-generation INSTIs, elvitegravir (EVG) and raltegravir.
- For children weighing ≥6 kg and aged ≥3 months, DTG is available in once-daily FDC formulations of abacavir (ABC)/DTG/lamivudine (3TC). If ABC/DTG/3TC is not an option, then single-entity DTG can be used in combination with other FDC tablets. Refer to the Dolutegravir section for dosing information.
    - ABC/DTG/3TC is available in two different formulations, with the appropriate formulation depending on weight. For children weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg and aged ≥3 months, ABC/DTG/3TC is available in a dispersible tablet, once-daily regimen (Triumeq PD); the number of tablets per dose depends on the child's weight. For children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg, ABC/DTG/3TC is available as a once-daily single-tablet regimen (Triumeq).
    - Whether considering DTG in FDC or single-entity form, **the film-coated tablets and dispersible tablets are not bioequivalent and, thus, are not interchangeable on a milligram-per-milligram basis.**

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

- For children weighing ≥14 kg, BIC is available as the single-tablet, once-daily regimen BIC/emtricitabine (FTC)/tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) (Biktarvy). There are two dosage strengths for pediatric use: one for use in children weighing ≥14 kg to <25 kg and another for children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg and adults. Refer to the Bictegravir section for dosing information.
- For children weighing ≥25 kg, EVG is available as the single-tablet, once-daily regimen elvitegravir/cobicistat (EVG/c)/FTC/TAF (Genvoya). EVG/c/FTC/TAF (Genvoya) has more drug–drug interactions than ABC/DTG/3TC (Triumeq or Triumeq PD) or BIC/FTC/TAF (Biktarvy). Refer to the Elvitegravir section for dosing information.
- The two-drug, co-packaged regimen of long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB) and rilpivirine (RPV) (Cabenuva) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children and adolescents aged ≥12 years and weighing ≥35 kg. CAB and RPV are administered by intramuscular injection on a monthly or every-2-months schedule after an optional oral lead-in. See the Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine sections for instructions about dosing and administration.

Nucleoside/Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

- ABC or TAF in combination with 3TC or FTC are favored over zidovudine (ZDV)/3TC because of the lower risk of nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor–associated mitochondrial toxicity.
- Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) is more potent than ABC at high viral loads (>100,000 copies/mL) when used in regimens that do not contain an INSTI.
- TAF is favored over TDF because of the lower risk of TDF-associated bone and renal toxicity. TDF is not recommended for children with sexual maturity ratings of 1 to 3 because of TDF-associated bone toxicity.
- For children weighing ≥14 kg who can swallow pills, FTC/TAF (Descovy) offers a once-daily alternative to twice-daily ZDV plus 3TC or ABC plus 3TC.
- For children weighing ≥14 kg and ≤35 kg, FTC/TAF (Descovy) can be used in combination with an INSTI or non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, but not with a protease inhibitor; this restriction does not apply to regimens containing ZDV or ABC.

Non-nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

- The FDC tablet doravirine/3TC/TDF is approved by the FDA for children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg who are ARV naive or virologically suppressed on a stable ARV regimen (see the Doravirine section).
- RPV has low potency at high viral loads (>100,000 copies/mL) and requires a high-fat meal for optimal absorption, so INSTIs are favored over RPV.

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

Fixed-Dose Combinations Available for Children and Adolescents

FDC by Class Brand name and generic[a] products, when available	FDC Components	Minimum Body Weight or Weight Range (kg) or Age[b]	Pill Size (mm × mm) or Largest Dimension (mm)[c]	Food Requirements
NRTI				
Cimduo	3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg	19	Take with or without food.
Combivir[d]	3TC 150 mg/ZDV 300 mg (scored tablet)	30 kg	18 × 7	Take with or without food.
Descovy	FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg	With an INSTI or NNRTI • 14 to <25 kg	N/A	Take with or without food.
	FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg	With an INSTI or NNRTI • 25 kg With a Boosted PI • 35 kg	12.5 × 6.4	Take with or without food.
Epzicom[d]	ABC 600 mg/3TC 300 mg	25 kg	21 × 9	Take with or without food.
Temixys	3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg	N/A	Take with or without food.
Truvada	FTC 100 mg/TDF 150 mg	17 to <22 kg	14	Take with or without food.
	FTC 133 mg/TDF 200 mg	22 to <28 kg	16	Take with or without food.
	FTC 167 mg/TDF 250 mg	28 to <35 kg	18	Take with or without food.
	FTC 200 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg	19 × 8.5	Take with or without food.
NRTI/NNRTI				
Atripla[d]	EFV 600 mg/FTC 200 mg/TDF 300 mg	40 kg	20	Take on an empty stomach.
Complera	FTC 200 mg/RPV 25 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg and aged ≥12 years	19	Take with a meal.[e]

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

FDC by Class Brand name and generic[a] products, when available	FDC Components	Minimum Body Weight or Weight Range (kg) or Age[b]	Pill Size (mm × mm) or Largest Dimension (mm)[c]	Food Requirements
Delstrigo	DOR 100 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg	19	Take with or without food.
Odefsey	FTC 200 mg/RPV 25 mg/TAF 25 mg	25 kg and aged ≥12 years	15	Take with a meal.[e]
Symfi	EFV 600 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg (scored tablet)	40 kg	23	Take on an empty stomach.
Symfi Lo[d]	EFV 400 mg/3TC 300 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg[f]	21	Take on an empty stomach.
NRTI/INSTI				
Biktarvy	BIC 30 mg/FTC 120 mg/TAF 15 mg	14 to <25 kg	N/A	Take with or without food.
	BIC 50 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 25 mg	25 kg	15 × 8	Take with or without food.
Dovato	DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg	25 kg	19	Take with or without food.
Triumeq	ABC 600 mg/DTG 50 mg/3TC 300 mg	25 kg	22 × 11	Take with or without food.
Triumeq PD	ABC 60 mg/DTG 5 mg/3TC 30 mg	6 to <25 kg and aged ≥3 months[g]	N/A (dispersible)	Take with or without food.
NNRTI/INSTI				
Cabenuva[h]	Cabenuva 400 mg/600 mg kit contains CAB 400 mg/2 mL vial and RPV 600 mg/2 mL vial	35 kg and aged ≥12 years	N/A	See Cabotegravir for instructions about dosing and administration.
	Cabenuva 600 mg/900 mg kit contains CAB 600 mg/3 mL vial and RPV 900 mg/3 mL vial	35 kg and aged ≥12 years	N/A	See Cabotegravir for instructions about dosing and administration.
Juluca	DTG 50 mg/RPV 25 mg	35 kg and aged ≥12 years[i]	14	Take with a meal.[e]
NRTI/INSTI/COBI				
Genvoya	EVG 150 mg/COBI 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg	25 kg	19 × 8.5	Take with food.
Stribild	EVG 150 mg/COBI 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TDF 300 mg	35 kg and SMR of 4 or 5[j]	20	Take with food.

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

FDC by Class Brand name and generic[a] products, when available	FDC Components	Minimum Body Weight or Weight Range (kg) or Age[b]	Pill Size (mm × mm) or Largest Dimension (mm)[c]	Food Requirements
NRTI/PI/COBI				
Symtuza	DRV 800 mg/COBI 150 mg/FTC 200 mg/TAF 10 mg	40 kg	22	Take with food.
PI/COBI				
Evotaz	ATV 300 mg/COBI 150 mg	35 kg	19	Take with food.
Prezcobix	DRV 675 mg/COBI 150 mg	25 to <40 kg	21	Take with food.
	DRV 800 mg/COBI 150 mg	40 kg	23	Take with food.
PI/RTV				
Kaletra	LPV/r Oral Solution • LPV 80 mg/mL and RTV 20 mg/mL Tablets • LPV 200 mg/RTV 50 mg • LPV 100 mg/RTV 25 mg	Postmenstrual Age of 42 Weeks and a Postnatal Age of **≥14** Days • No minimum weight	19	Take with or without food.

[a] The possibility of planned and unplanned pregnancy should be considered when selecting an antiretroviral therapy (ART) regimen for an adolescent. When discussing ART options with adolescents and their caregivers, it is important to consider childbearing potential and the benefits and risks of all ARV drugs and to provide the information and counseling needed to support informed decision-making (see Table 7. Situation-Specific Recommendations for Use of Antiretroviral Drugs in Pregnant People and Nonpregnant People Who Are Trying to Conceive and Appendix C: Antiretroviral Counseling Guide for Health Care Providers).

[b] Minimum body weight and age are those recommended by the FDA, unless otherwise noted.

[c] Sizes or largest dimensions of generic drugs are not listed because they may vary by manufacturer; this information is available by looking up one of the drug components using DailyMed.

[d] Brand name product has been discontinued; generic version is still available.

[e] Patients must be able to take oral RPV with a meal of at least 500 calories on a regular schedule (a protein drink alone does not constitute a meal).

[f] Because of pharmacokinetic concerns, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV (the Panel) recommends caution when using Symfi Lo in children and adolescents who have SMRs of 1 to 3 and weigh ≥40 kg (see the Efavirenz section).

Appendix A, Table 2. Antiretroviral Fixed-Dose Combination Tablets and Co-packaged Formulations: Minimum Body Weights and Considerations for Use in Children and Adolescents

[g] ABC/DTG/3TC is available in dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) for children weighing ≥6 kg to <25 kg and aged ≥3 months with the dosage and number of tablets based on weight. Refer to the Dolutegravir section for exact dosage and instructions for administration. Dispersible tablets (Triumeq PD) are not recommended for children and adolescents weighing ≥25 kg.

[h] Long-acting injectable CAB and RPV for intramuscular administration are available as a co-packaged product (Cabenuva); oral formulations of CAB and RPV for the optional initial lead-in dosing or bridging between injections >7 days from the target injection window must be prescribed separately (see the Cabotegravir and Rilpivirine sections).

[i] DTG/RPV (Juluca) is not currently approved for use in adolescents with HIV; however, the doses of the component drugs that make up this FDC tablet are approved for use in adolescents. The Panel usually endorses the use of adult formulations in adolescents, and this product may be appropriate for use in certain adolescents. See Modifying Antiretroviral Regimens in Children With Sustained Virologic Suppression on Antiretroviral Therapy for additional considerations on using this combination.

[j] Although Stribild is approved by the FDA for use in children and adolescents weighing ≥35 kg and aged ≥12 years, the Panel does not recommend its use in children with SMRs of 1 to 3 given the availability of other INSTI-containing FDCs.

Key: 3TC = lamivudine; ABC = abacavir; ATV = atazanavir; BIC = bictegravir; CAB = cabotegravir; COBI = cobicistat; DOR = doravirine; DRV = darunavir; DTG = dolutegravir; EFV = efavirenz; EVG = elvitegravir; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; FDC = fixed-dose combination; FTC = emtricitabine; INSTI = integrase strand transfer inhibitor; LPV = lopinavir; LPV/r = lopinavir/ritonavir; N/A = information not available or not applicable; NNRTI = non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; NRTI = nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor; PI = protease inhibitor; RPV = rilpivirine; RTV = ritonavir; SMR = sexual maturity rating; TAF = tenofovir alafenamide; TDF = tenofovir disoproxil fumarate; ZDV = zidovudine

Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information

Archived Drugs

The Archived Drugs section of Appendix A: Pediatric Antiretroviral Drug Information provides access to the last updated versions of drug sections that are no longer being reviewed by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel). Archived Drugs includes older antiretroviral drugs that the Panel does not recommend for use in children because they have unacceptable toxicities, inferior virologic efficacy, a high pill burden, pharmacologic concerns, and/or a limited amount of pediatric data.

Didanosine (ddl, Videx)

Enfuvirtide (T-20, Fuzeon)

Fosamprenavir (FPV, Lexiva)

Indinavir (IDV, Crixivan)

Nelfinavir (NFV, Viracept)

Saquinavir (SQV, Invirase)

Stavudine (d4t, Zerit)

Tipranavir (TPV, Aptivus)

Didanosine (ddI, Videx)

Updated: May 22, 2018
Reviewed: May 22, 2018

Formulations

Pediatric Oral Solution: 10 mg/mL

Enteric-Coated (EC) Delayed-Release Capsules (EC Beadlets): 125 mg, 200 mg, 250 mg, and 400 mg

Generic Formulations

Delayed-Release Capsules: 125 mg, 200 mg, 250 mg, and 400 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: Didanosine is no longer recommended by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV for use in children due to higher rates of adverse effects than other NRTIs.

Neonate/Infant Dose (Aged 2 Weeks to <3 Months)

- 50 mg/m^2 of body surface area every 12 hours. See dosing section below for justification of this dose.

Infant Dose (Aged ≥3 Months to 8 Months)

- 100 mg/m^2 of body surface area every 12 hours

Pediatric Dose of Oral Solution (Aged >8 Months)

- 120 mg/m^2 of body surface area every 12 hours
- Dose range: 90–150 mg/m^2 of body surface area every 12 hours. Do not exceed maximum adult dose; see table below.
- In treatment-naive children aged 3 years to 21 years, 240 mg/m^2 of body surface area once daily (oral solution or capsules) has resulted in viral suppression.

Pediatric Dose of Videx EC or Generic Capsules (Aged 6–**18 Years and Weighing ≥20 kg)**

Body Weight	Dose
20 kg to <25 kg	200 mg once daily
25 kg to <60 kg	250 mg once daily
≥60 kg	400 mg once daily

Selected Adverse Events

- Peripheral neuropathy
- Diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported (the risk is increased when didanosine is used in combination with stavudine).
- Pancreatitis (less common in children than in adults, more common when didanosine is used in combination with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate or stavudine)
- Non-cirrhotic portal hypertension
- Retinal changes, optic neuritis
- Insulin resistance/diabetes mellitus

Special Instructions

- Administer didanosine on an empty stomach (30 minutes before or 2 hours after a meal). To improve adherence, some practitioners administer didanosine without regard to timing of meals (see text below).
- Didanosine powder for oral solution contains antacids that may interfere with the absorption of other medications, including protease inhibitors (PIs). See individual PI for instructions on timing of administration.
- Shake didanosine oral solution well before use. Keep refrigerated; solution is stable for 30 days.

Adolescent and Adult Dose

Body Weight	Dose
<60 kg	250 mg once daily
≥60 kg	400 mg once daily

Pediatric and Adolescent Dose of Didanosine when Combined with Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate

- This combination should be avoided because of enhanced didanosine toxicity, reports of immunologic nonresponse, high rates of early virologic failure, and rapid selection of resistance mutations (see the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines).

Metabolism/Elimination

- Renal excretion 50%
- Decrease dosage in patients with impaired renal function. Consult manufacturer's prescribing information for adjustment of dosage in accordance with creatinine clearance.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Absorption:* Antacids in didanosine oral solution can decrease the absorption of a number of medications if given at the same time. Avoid giving other medications concurrently with didanosine oral solution.
- *Mechanism unknown:* Didanosine serum concentrations are increased when didanosine is co-administered with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF). This combination should be avoided.
- *Renal elimination:* Drugs that decrease renal function can decrease didanosine clearance.
- *Overlapping toxicities:* The combination of stavudine with didanosine may result in enhanced toxicity. This combination should be avoided (see the Major Toxicities section below).

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- *Less common (more severe):* Peripheral neuropathy, electrolyte abnormalities, and hyperuricemia. Lactic acidosis and hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported, and are more common when didanosine is used in combination with stavudine. Pancreatitis (less common in children than in adults, more common when didanosine is used in combination with TDF or stavudine) can occur. Increased liver enzymes, retinal depigmentation, and optic neuritis have been reported. Decreases in CD4 T lymphocyte counts have been reported when didanosine is used in combination with TDF.
- *Rare:* Non-cirrhotic portal hypertension, presenting clinically with hematemesis, esophageal varices, ascites, and splenomegaly, and associated with increased transaminases, increased alkaline phosphatase, and thrombocytopenia, has been associated with long-term didanosine use.[1]
- *Possible risk of cancer after in-utero exposure*: In a study of 15,163 children without HIV infection who were exposed to at least one nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI) *in utero*, 21 cancers were identified. Didanosine accounted for only 10% of prescriptions but was associated with one-third of identified cancers, and, in multivariate analysis, didanosine was

associated with a 5.5-fold (95% CI, 2.1–14.4) increased risk of cancer with first-trimester exposure.[2] During adolescence, didanosine use while pregnant or at risk of becoming pregnant should prompt health care professionals to caution about this cancer risk.

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Although didanosine is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved NRTI for use in children as part of antiretroviral therapy, it **is not recommended** for in children due to its significant toxicity and the availability of safer agents.

Dosing

Standard Dose in Children Aged >8 Months

The standard dose of didanosine oral solution in children aged >8 months is 120 mg/m^2 of body surface area twice daily.[3,4] Doses higher than 180 mg/m^2 of body surface area twice daily are associated with increased toxicity.[5]

Special Considerations for Children Aged 2 Weeks to <8 Months

For infants aged 2 weeks to 8 months, the FDA recommends 100 mg/m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily. However, because pharmacokinetic (PK) differences in younger infants (aged 2 weeks–3 months) compared with older children raise concerns for increased toxicity in this younger age group, the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV recommends a dose of 50 mg/m^2 of body surface area twice daily for infants aged 2 weeks to 3 months, with an increase to 100 mg/m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily at 3 months, and finally increasing to 120 mg/m^2 of body surface area per dose twice daily at age 8 months (as discussed above).

Frequency of Administration (Once Daily or Twice Daily)

In those aged >3 years, a once-daily dosing regimen may be preferable to promote adherence, and multiple studies support the favorable PKs and efficacy of once-daily dosing of 240 mg/m^2 of body surface area.[6]

Food Restrictions

Although the prescribing information recommends taking didanosine on an empty stomach, this is impractical for infants who must be fed frequently, and it may decrease medication adherence by increasing regimen complexity. A comparison showed that systemic exposure measured by area under the curve was similar whether didanosine oral solution was given to children with or without food; absorption of didanosine administered with food was slower and elimination more prolonged.[7]

To improve adherence, some practitioners administer didanosine without regard to timing of meals. Studies in adults suggest that didanosine can be given without regard to food.[8,9] A European study dosed didanosine oral solution as part of a four-drug regimen either 1 hour before or 1 hour after meals, but allowed the extended-release formulation to be given without food restriction. The study showed good virologic outcome with up to 96 weeks of follow-up.[10]

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Enfuvirtide (T-20, Fuzeon)

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Formulations

Lyophilized Powder for Injection: 108-mg vial of enfuvirtide. Reconstitution with 1.1 mL sterile water will deliver 90 mg/mL.

Convenience Kit: 60 single-use vials of enfuvirtide (108-mg vial reconstituted as 90 mg/mL), 60 vials of sterile water for injection, 60 reconstitution syringes (3 mL), 60 administration syringes (1 mL), alcohol wipes

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosage Recommendations

Pediatric and Adolescent Dose (Aged 6–16 Years)

Children Aged <6 Years

- Not approved for use in children aged <6 years

Children Aged ≥6 Years

- 2 mg/kg (maximum dose 90 mg [1 mL]) twice daily injected subcutaneously (SQ) into the upper arm, anterior thigh, or abdomen

Adolescent (Aged >16 Years) and Adult Dose

- 90 mg (1 mL) twice daily injected SQ into the upper arm, anterior thigh, or abdomen

Selected Adverse Events

- Local injection site reactions (e.g., pain, erythema, induration, nodules and cysts, pruritus, ecchymosis) in up to 98% of patients.
- Increased rate of bacterial pneumonia (unclear association).
- Hypersensitivity reaction (HSR)—symptoms may include rash, fever, nausea, vomiting, chills, rigors, hypotension, or elevated serum transaminases. Rechallenge is not recommended.

Special Instructions

- Carefully instruct patient or caregiver in proper technique for drug reconstitution and administration of SQ injections. Enfuvirtide injection instructions are provided with convenience kits.
- Allow reconstituted vial to stand until the powder goes completely into solution, which could take up to 45 minutes. Do not shake.
- Once reconstituted, inject enfuvirtide immediately or keep refrigerated in the original vial until use. Reconstituted enfuvirtide must be used within 24 hours.
- Enfuvirtide must be given SQ; severity of reactions increases if given intramuscularly.
- Give each injection at a site different from the preceding injection site; do not inject into moles, scar tissue, bruises, or the navel. Both the patient/caregiver and health care provider should carefully monitor for signs and symptoms of local infection or cellulitis.
- To minimize local reactions, apply ice or heat after injection or gently massage injection site to better disperse the dose. There are reports of injection-associated neuralgia and paresthesia when alternative delivery systems, such as needle-free injection devices, are used.

	• Advise patients/caregivers of the possibility of a HSR; instruct them to discontinue treatment and seek immediate medical attention if a patient develops signs and symptoms consistent with a HSR.
	Metabolism/Elimination
	• Catabolism to constituent amino acids.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

There are no known significant drug interactions with enfuvirtide.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Almost all patients (87% to 98%) experience local injection site reactions including pain and discomfort, induration, erythema, nodules and cysts, pruritus, and ecchymosis. Reactions are usually mild to moderate in severity but can be more severe. Average duration of local injection site reaction is 3 to 7 days but was >7 days in 24% of patients.
- *Less common (more severe):* Increased rate of bacterial pneumonia (unclear association).[1] Pediatric studies have lacked the statistical power to answer questions concerning enfuvirtide use and increased risk of pneumonia.
- *Rare:* Hypersensitivity reactions (HSRs) (<1%) including fever, nausea and vomiting, chills, rigors, hypotension, and elevated liver transaminases; immune-mediated reactions including primary immune complex reaction, respiratory distress, glomerulonephritis, and Guillain-Barre syndrome. Patients experiencing HSRs should seek immediate medical attention. Therapy should not be restarted in patients with signs and symptoms consistent with HSRs.
- *Pediatric specific:* Local site cellulitis requiring antimicrobial therapy (up to 11% in certain subgroups of patients in pediatric studies).[2]

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Resistance testing must be ordered specifically for fusion inhibitors, as it is not performed on routine genotypic or phenotypic assays.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Although enfuvirtide is Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for use in children, it is not commonly used because of its high cost, need for twice-daily subcutaneous (SQ) injections, and high

rate of injection site reactions. Use in deep salvage regimens[3] has also declined with the availability of integrase inhibitors and other entry inhibitors (such as maraviroc).

Pharmacokinetics

A single-dose pharmacokinetic evaluation study of enfuvirtide, given SQ to 14 children with HIV aged 4 years to 12 years (PACTG 1005), identified that enfuvirtide 60 mg/m^2 of body surface area per dose resulted in a target trough concentration that approximated the equivalent of a 90-mg dose delivered SQ to an adult (1000 mg/mL).[4] In a second pediatric study of 25 children aged 5 years to 16 years, a 2-mg/kg dose (maximum 90 mg) of enfuvirtide given twice daily yielded drug concentrations similar to 60 mg/m^2 of body surface area dose independent of age group, body weight, body surface area, and sexual maturation.[5] The FDA-recommended dose of enfuvirtide for children aged 6 to 16 years is 2 mg/kg (maximum 90 mg) administered SQ twice daily. Further data are needed for dosing in children aged <6 years.

Efficacy

The safety and antiretroviral (ARV) activity of twice-daily SQ enfuvirtide administration at 60 mg/m^2 per dose plus optimized background therapy (OBT) was evaluated over 96 weeks in 14 children aged 4 to 12 years who had failed to achieve viral suppression on multiple prior ARV regimens (PACTG 1005). At 24 weeks 71% of the children had a >1.0$_{log}$ reduction in viral load; 43% and 21% had HIV RNA levels suppressed to <400 copies/mL and <50 copies/mL, respectively. However, only 36% of children maintained virologic suppression (>1.0$_{log}$ decrease in HIV RNA) at Week 96. Most children had local injection site reactions.[6] Significant improvements in CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell percentages and height *z* scores were observed in children receiving enfuvirtide for 48 and 96 weeks.

T20-310, a Phase 1/2 study of enfuvirtide (2.0 mg/kg SQ, maximum 90 mg, twice daily) plus OBT, enrolled 52 treatment-experienced children aged 3 to 16 years for 48 weeks. Only 64% of the children completed 48 weeks of therapy. The median decrease in HIV RNA was −1.17 log$_{10}$ copies/mL (n = 32) and increase in CD4 cell count was 106 cells/mm^3 (n = 25). At Week 8, treatment responses as measured by several plasma HIV RNA parameters were superior in younger children (aged <11 years) compared with adolescents. Median increases in CD4 cell count were 257 cells/mm^3 in children and 84 cells/mm^3 in adolescents. Local skin reactions were common in all age groups (87% of study participants). The observed differential responses between children and adolescents probably reflect unique challenges to adherence with the prescribed regimen.[2]

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Fosamprenavir (FPV, Lexiva)

Updated: May 22, 2018
Reviewed: May 22, 2018

Formulations

Tablets: 700 mg

Oral Suspension: 50 mg/mL

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations

Pediatric Dose (Aged >6 Months to 18 Years)

- Unboosted fosamprenavir (without ritonavir) is Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for antiretroviral (ARV)-naive children aged 2 to 5 years, but **not recommended** by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) because of low exposures (see text below).
- Boosted fosamprenavir (with ritonavir) is FDA-approved for ARV-naive infants ≥4 weeks and for treatment-experienced infants ≥6 months; however, the Panel **does not recommend** use in infants aged <6 months because of similarly low exposures (see text below). If used in infants as young as 4 weeks, it should only be administered to infants born at 38 weeks' gestation or greater.

Note: Once-daily dosing **is not recommended** for any pediatric patient.

Pediatric Dose (Aged ≥6 Months to 18 Years)

Twice-Daily Dose Regimens by Weight for Pediatric **Patients ≥6 Months Using Fosamprenavir Oral Suspension** with Ritonavir

Weight	Dose (Both Drugs Twice Daily[a] with Food)
<11 kg	Fosamprenavir 45 mg/kg/dose plus ritonavir 7 mg/kg/dose
11 kg to <15 kg	Fosamprenavir 30 mg/kg/dose plus ritonavir 3 mg/kg/dose
15 kg to <20 kg	Fosamprenavir 23 mg/kg/dose plus ritonavir 3 mg/kg/dose
≥20 kg	Fosamprenavir 18 mg/kg/dose plus ritonavir 3 mg/kg/dose

Selected Adverse Events

- Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
- Skin rash (fosamprenavir has a sulfonamide moiety. Stevens-Johnson syndrome and erythema multiforme have been reported.)
- Headache
- Hyperlipidemia, hyperglycemia
- Nephrolithiasis
- Transaminase elevation
- Fat maldistribution
- Possible increased bleeding episodes in patients with hemophilia

Special Instructions

- Fosamprenavir tablets with ritonavir should be taken with food. Children should take the suspension with food.
- Patients taking antacids should take fosamprenavir at least 1 hour before or after antacid use.
- Fosamprenavir contains a sulfonamide moiety. The potential for cross sensitivity between fosamprenavir and other drugs in the sulfonamide class is unknown. Fosamprenavir should be used with caution in patients with sulfonamide allergy.
- Shake oral suspension well before use. Refrigeration is not required.

[a] Not to exceed the adult dose of fosamprenavir 700 mg plus ritonavir 100 mg twice daily. Note: When administered with ritonavir, the adult regimen of 700 mg fosamprenavir tablets plus 100 mg ritonavir, both given twice daily, can be used in patients weighing ≥39 kg. Ritonavir tablets can be used in patients weighing ≥33 kg. Adolescent and Adult Dose • Dosing regimen depends on whether the patient is ARV-naive or ARV-experienced. *ARV-Naive Patients* • Fosamprenavir 700 mg plus ritonavir 100 mg, both twice daily • Fosamprenavir 1400 mg plus ritonavir 100–200 mg, both once daily *Protease-Inhibitor-Experienced Patients* • Fosamprenavir 700 mg plus ritonavir 100 mg, both twice daily. Note: Once-daily administration of fosamprenavir plus ritonavir is not recommended.	Metabolism/Elimination • The prodrug fosamprenavir is rapidly and almost completely hydrolyzed to amprenavir by cellular phosphatases in the gut as it is absorbed. • Amprenavir is a cytochrome P (CYP) 450 3A4 inhibitor, inducer, and substrate. Fosamprenavir Dosing in Patients with Hepatic Impairment • Specific dose adjustments are recommended for adults with mild, moderate, and severe hepatic impairment. However, there are no data to support dosing recommendations for pediatric patients with hepatic impairment. Please refer to the package insert. Fosamprenavir Dosing in Patients with Renal Impairment • No dose adjustment is required in patients with renal impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Fosamprenavir may interact with a number of other drugs, and using ritonavir as a boosting agent increases the potential for drug interactions. Before administration, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions with fosamprenavir.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, perioral paresthesia, headache, rash, lipid abnormalities
- *Less common (more severe):* Life-threatening rash, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome, in <1% of patients. Fat maldistribution, neutropenia, and elevated serum creatinine kinase levels.
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in hemophiliacs, hemolytic anemia, elevation in serum transaminases, angioedema, and nephrolithiasis.
- *Pediatric-specific:* Vomiting was more frequent in children than in adults during clinical trials of fosamprenavir with ritonavir (20% to 36% vs. 10%, respectively) and in trials of fosamprenavir without ritonavir (60% vs. 16%, respectively). Neutropenia was also more common in children across all the trials (15% vs. 3%, respectively).[1]

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Fosamprenavir is Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for use in children as young as age 4 weeks, but the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV (the Panel) recommends use only in children aged ≥6 months. Although unboosted fosamprenavir has been approved by the FDA for antiretroviral-naive children aged 2 to 5 years, the Panel **does not recommend** unboosted fosamprenavir for this—or any other—age group because of low exposures and also because unboosted fosamprenavir may select for mutations associated with resistance to darunavir.[2]

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics

Dosing recommendations for fosamprenavir are based on three pediatric studies that enrolled more than 200 children aged 4 weeks to 18 years. In two, open-label trials in both treatment-experienced and treatment-naive children aged 2 to 18 years,[3,4] fosamprenavir was well-tolerated and effective in suppressing viral load and increasing CD4 T lymphocyte count. However, data were insufficient to support a once-daily dosing regimen of fosamprenavir/ritonavir in children; therefore, once-daily dosing **is not recommended** for pediatric patients.

Pharmacokinetics in Infants

In a study of infants, higher doses of both fosamprenavir and ritonavir were used in treatment-naive infants as young as age 4 weeks and in treatment-experienced infants as young as age 6 months.[1,5] Exposures in those aged <6 months were much lower than those achieved in older children and adults and comparable to those seen with unboosted fosamprenavir (see table below). Given these low exposures, limited data, large dosing volumes, unpleasant taste, and the availability of alternatives for infants and young children, the Panel **does not recommend** fosamprenavir use in infants aged <6 months.

Table A. Fosamprenavir Dose and Amprenavir Exposure by Age Group

Population	Dose	$AUC_{0\text{-}24h}$ (mcg*hr/mL) Except Where Noted	C_{min} (mcg/mL)
Infants Aged <6 Months	FPV 45 mg/kg plus RTV 10 mg/kg twice daily	26.6[a]	0.86
Children Aged 2 Years to <6 Years	FPV 30 mg/kg twice daily (no RTV)	22.3[a]	0.513
Children Weighing <11 kg	FPV 45 mg/kg plus RTV 7 mg/kg twice daily	57.3	1.65
Children Weighing 15 kg to <20 kg	FPV 23 mg/kg FPV plus RTV 3 mg/kg twice daily	121.0	3.56
Children Weighing **≥20 kg**	FPV 18 mg/kg plus RTV 3 mg/kg twice daily (maximum 700/100 mg)	72.3–97.9	1.98–2.54
Adults	FPV 1400 mg twice daily (no RTV)	33	0.35
Adults	FPV 1400 mg plus RTV 100–200 mg RTV once daily	66.4–69.4	0.86–1.45
Adults	FPV 700 mg plus RTV 100 mg twice daily	79.2	2.12

[a] $AUC_{0\text{-}12}$ (mcg*hr/mL)

Key: $AUC_{0\text{-}24h}$ = area under the curve for 24 hours post-dose; C_{min} = minimum plasma concentration; FPV = fosamprenavir; RTV = ritonavir

Note: Dose for those weighing 11 kg to <15 kg is based on population pharmacokinetic studies; therefore, AUC and C_{min} are not available.

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Indinavir (IDV, Crixivan)

Updated: May 22, 2018
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Formulations

Capsules: 100 mg, 200 mg, and 400 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations

Neonate and Infant Dose

- Not approved for use in neonates/infants
- Should not be administered to neonates because of the risks associated with hyperbilirubinemia (kernicterus)

Pediatric Dose

- Not approved for use in children
- A range of indinavir doses (234–500 mg/m^2 body surface area) boosted with low-dose ritonavir has been studied in children (see text below).

Adolescent and Adult Dose

- 800 mg indinavir plus 100 or 200 mg ritonavir every 12 hours
- The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV **does not recommend** the use of indinavir in adolescents.

Selected Adverse Events

- Nephrolithiasis
- Gastrointestinal intolerance, nausea
- Hepatitis
- Indirect hyperbilirubinemia
- Hyperlipidemia
- Hyperglycemia
- Fat maldistribution
- Possible increased bleeding episodes in patients with hemophilia

Special Instructions

- When indinavir is given in combination with ritonavir, meal restrictions are not necessary.
- Adequate hydration is required to minimize risk of nephrolithiasis (≥48 oz of fluid daily in adult patients).
- Indinavir capsules are sensitive to moisture; store at room temperature (59–86ºF) in original container with desiccant.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) inhibitor and substrate

Indinavir Dosing in Patients with Hepatic Impairment

- Dose should be decreased in patients with mild-to-moderate hepatic impairment (recommended dose for adults is 600 mg indinavir every 8 hours). No dosing information is available for children with any degree of hepatic impairment or for adults with severe hepatic impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) is the major enzyme responsible for metabolism. There is potential for multiple drug interactions with indinavir.
- Avoid other drugs that cause hyperbilirubinemia, such as atazanavir.
- Before administration, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions with indinavir.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Nephrolithiasis/urolithiasis with indinavir crystal deposit is reported more frequently in children (29%) than in adults (12.4%).[1] Interstitial nephritis and urothelial inflammation has been commonly reported in adults.[2] Nausea, abdominal pain, headache, metallic taste, dizziness, asymptomatic hyperbilirubinemia (10%), lipid abnormalities, pruritus, and rash.
- *Less common (more severe):* Fat maldistribution.
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in hemophiliacs, acute hemolytic anemia, and hepatitis (life-threatening in rare cases).

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Indinavir has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the pediatric population. Although indinavir was one of the first protease inhibitors to be studied in children, its use in pediatrics has never been common and is currently very rare.[3] Indinavir **is not recommended** by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV for use in children and adolescents because of its unfavorable toxicity profile, limited efficacy data, and uncertain pharmacokinetics.

Efficacy and Pharmacokinetics

Both unboosted and ritonavir-boosted indinavir have been studied in children with HIV. In children, an unboosted indinavir dose of 500 to 600 mg/m^2 body surface area given every 8 hours results in peak blood concentrations and area under the curve that are slightly higher than those in adults, but trough concentrations are considerably lower. A significant proportion of children have trough indinavir concentrations less than the 0.1 mg/L value associated with virologic efficacy in adults.[4-7]

Studies that investigated a range of indinavir/ritonavir doses in small groups of children have shown that indinavir 500 mg/m^2 body surface area plus ritonavir 100 mg/m^2 body surface area twice daily is probably too high,[8] that indinavir 234 to 250 mg/m^2 body surface area plus low-dose ritonavir twice daily is too low,[9,10] and that indinavir 400 mg/m^2 body surface area plus ritonavir 100 to 125 mg/m^2 body surface area twice daily results in exposures approximating those seen with indinavir 800 mg plus ritonavir 100 mg twice daily in adults, albeit with considerable inter-individual variability and high rates of toxicity.[10-12]

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Nelfinavir (NFV, Viracept)

Updated: May 22, 2018
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Formulations
Tablets: 250 mg and 625 mg For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations	Selected Adverse Events
Note: The Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV no longer recommends nelfinavir-based regimens for use in children due to inferior potency compared to other regimens. Neonate and Infant Dose • Nelfinavir should not be used for treatment in children aged <2 years. **Pediatric Dose (Aged ≥2 Years)** • 45–55 mg/kg twice daily Adolescent and Adult Dose • 1,250 mg (five 250-mg tablets or two 625-mg tablets) twice daily	• Diarrhea • Hyperlipidemia • Hyperglycemia • Fat maldistribution • Serum transaminase elevations **Special Instructions** • Administer nelfinavir with meal or light snack. • If co-administered with didanosine, administer nelfinavir 2 hours before or 1 hour after didanosine. • Patients unable to swallow nelfinavir tablets can dissolve the tablets in a small amount of water. Once tablets are dissolved, mix the cloudy mixture well and consume it immediately. The glass should be rinsed with water and the rinse swallowed to ensure that the entire dose is consumed. Tablets can also be crushed and administered with pudding or other nonacidic foods. **Metabolism/Elimination** • Cytochrome P (CYP) 2C19 and 3A4 substrate • Metabolized to active M8 metabolite • CYP3A4 inhibitor

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Metabolism:* Cytochrome P (CYP) 2C19 and 3A4 substrate and CYP3A4 inhibitor. Ritonavir boosting does not significantly increase nelfinavir concentrations, and co-administration of nelfinavir with ritonavir **is not recommended**.

- There is potential for multiple drug interactions with nelfinavir. Before administering nelfinavir, carefully review a patient's medication profile for potential drug interactions.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea (most common), asthenia, abdominal pain, rash, lipid abnormalities
- *Less common (more severe):* Fat redistribution, exacerbation of chronic liver disease
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of pre-existing diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in patients with hemophilia, elevations in transaminases

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Nelfinavir is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children aged ≥2 years. Given the higher variability of nelfinavir plasma concentrations in infants and younger children,[1,2] nelfinavir is not approved for children aged <2 years. Despite being FDA-approved for pediatric use, nelfinavir **is not recommended** for use in children and adolescents by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV, due to its limited efficacy and uncertain pharmacokinetics (PK).

Efficacy in Pediatric Clinical Trials

Nelfinavir used in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) drugs has been extensively studied in children with HIV infection.[3-10] In randomized trials of children aged 2 to 13 years receiving nelfinavir as part of triple combination therapy, the proportion of patients with HIV RNA <400 copies/mL through 48 weeks of therapy has been quite variable, ranging from 26% to 69%. The antiviral response to nelfinavir is significantly less in children aged <2 years than in older children.[8,10,11] In clinical studies, virologic and immunologic response to nelfinavir-based therapy has varied according to the patient's age or prior treatment history, the number of drugs included in the combination regimen, and the dose of nelfinavir used.

Pharmacokinetics: Exposure-Response Relationships

Nelfinavir's relatively poor ability to control plasma viremia in infants and children in clinical trials may be related to its lower potency when compared with other ARV drugs, as well as highly variable drug exposure, metabolism, and poor palatability.[12-14] The bioavailability of dissolved nelfinavir tablets is comparable to that of tablets swallowed whole.[3,15]

Administration of nelfinavir with food increases nelfinavir exposure (area under the curve increases by up to fivefold) and decreases PK variability when compared to the fasted state. Nelfinavir plasma exposure may be even more unpredictable in pediatric patients than in adults due to the increased

clearance of nelfinavir observed in children and difficulties in taking nelfinavir with sufficient food to improve bioavailability.

Nelfinavir is metabolized by multiple CYP450 enzymes, including CYP3A4 and CYP2C19. The variability of drug exposure at any given dose is much higher for children than for adults,[16] which has been attributed—at least in part—to differences in the diets of children and adults. Two population PK studies of nelfinavir and its active metabolite, M8, describe the large intersubject variability observed in children.[17,18] Furthermore, CYP2C19 genotype has been shown to affect nelfinavir PK and the virologic responses in children with HIV.[12]

Several studies have demonstrated a correlation between nelfinavir trough concentrations and virologic response. In both children and adults, an increased risk of virologic failure was associated with low nelfinavir drug exposure, particularly with a nelfinavir minimum plasma concentration (C_{min}) <1.0 mcg/mL.[19-21]

In a study of 32 children treated with a high dose of nelfinavir (a twofold increase of the recommended dose), 80% of children with morning trough nelfinavir plasma concentration >0.8 mcg/mL had HIV RNA concentrations <50 copies/mL at Week 48, compared with only 29% of those with morning trough <0.8 mcg/mL.[22] Children in the group with C_{trough} <0.8 mcg/mL were younger than the children in the group with C_{trough} >0.8 mcg/mL (median ages in these groups were 3.8 years and 8.3 years, respectively).[22] Therapeutic drug monitoring of nelfinavir plasma concentrations, with appropriate adjustments for low drug exposure, has been shown to improve virologic response in adults and children.[18,19,23,24] Pediatric and adolescent and patients may require doses higher than those recommended in adults to achieve higher plasma nelfinavir exposure.

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Saquinavir (SQV, Invirase)

Updated: May 22, 2018
Reviewed: May 22, 2018

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Formulations</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Capsules: 200 mg

Tablets: 500 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Dosing Recommendations</th><th>Selected Adverse Events</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Pediatric Dose

• Not approved for use in infants, children, and adolescents aged <16 years.

Adolescent and Adult Dose

• Saquinavir should only be used in combination with ritonavir.

• Saquinavir 1000 mg plus ritonavir 100 mg twice daily</td><td>• Gastrointestinal intolerance, nausea, diarrhea

• Elevated transaminases

• Hyperlipidemia

• Hyperglycemia

• Fat maldistribution

• PR interval prolongation, QT interval prolongation, and ventricular tachycardia (Torsades de Pointes)</td></tr>
<tr><th>Special Instructions</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Administer within 2 hours after a full meal.

• Sun exposure can cause photosensitivity reactions; advise patients to use sunscreen or protective clothing.

• Pre-therapy electrocardiogram is recommended; saquinavir is contraindicated in patients with a prolonged QT interval.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Metabolism/Elimination</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) substrate and inhibitor

• 90% metabolized in the liver

• Use saquinavir with caution in patients who have hepatic impairment; no dose adjustment recommended.</td></tr>
</table>

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Saquinavir is both a substrate and inhibitor of the cytochrome P 450 3A4 (CYP3A4) system. Potential exists for multiple drug interactions. Saquinavir **should not be coadministered** with

drugs that are highly dependent on CYP3A clearance, especially in cases where elevated plasma concentrations of the coadministered drug can cause serious or life-threatening events.

- Before administration, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, abdominal discomfort, headache, nausea, paresthesia, skin rash, lipid abnormalities
- *Less common (more severe):* Exacerbation of chronic liver disease, lipodystrophy
- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of pre-existing diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in patients with hemophilia, pancreatitis, and elevation in serum transaminases. Saquinavir administered with ritonavir can lead to prolonged QT and/or PR intervals with potential for heart block and ventricular tachycardia (Torsades de Pointes).

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Saquinavir is not approved for use in children or adolescents aged <16 years.[1]

Efficacy

Saquinavir has been studied with nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors and other protease inhibitors in children with HIV.[2-9] Saquinavir/ritonavir (SQV/r) and a dual-protease inhibitor saquinavir/lopinavir/ritonavir regimen were considered for salvage therapy in children prior to the emergence of the new classes of antiretroviral medications; these regimens **are no longer recommended.**

Pharmacokinetics

Pharmacokinetic (PK) data from children who received SQV/r showed prohibitively low exposure in children younger than 2 years.[10] In children aged ≥2 years, a dose of saquinavir 50 mg/kg twice daily in combination with ritonavir and lopinavir/ritonavir resulted in steady-state plasma trough concentrations (C_{trough}) similar to those seen adults.[9,11] No clinical trials have collected data on the efficacy of saquinavir doses <50 mg/kg in children.

Toxicity

In healthy adult volunteers, SQV/r dose and exposure were associated with increases in both QT and PR intervals.[1,12] Rare cases of Torsades de Pointes and complete heart block have been reported in postmarketing surveillance. SQV/r **is not recommended** for adolescent and adult patients with any

of the following conditions: documented congenital or acquired QT prolongation, pretreatment QT interval of >450 milliseconds, refractory hypokalemia or hypomagnesemia, complete atrioventricular block without implanted pacemakers, at risk of complete atrioventricular block, or the use of other drugs that prolong QT interval. An electrocardiogram (EKG) is recommended before initiation of therapy with saquinavir and repeat EKGs should be considered during therapy.

Steady-state saquinavir exposures observed in one pediatric trial (NV20911) were substantially higher than those seen in historical data from adults with QT and PR prolongation.[1,12] Although no EKG abnormalities have been reported among the small number of subjects in pediatric trials, pediatric PK/pharmacodynamics modeling suggests that reducing the saquinavir dose in order to minimize the risk of QT prolongation would decrease saquinavir efficacy in children. Pediatric saquinavir dose recommendations that were both reliably effective and below the thresholds of concern for QT and PR prolongation were not determined.

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Stavudine (d4T, Zerit)

Updated: May 22, 2018
Reviewed: May 22, 2018

Formulations

Powder for Oral Solution: 1 mg/mL

Capsules: 15 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg, and 40 mg

Generic Formulations

Powder for Oral Solution: 1 mg/mL

Capsules: 15 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg, and 40 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: Stavudine is no longer recommended for use in children by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV, because it causes higher rates of adverse effects than other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs).

Pediatric (Aged ≥14 Days and Weighing <30 kg) Dose

- 1 mg/kg per dose twice daily

Adolescent (Weighing ≥30 kg) and Adult Dose

- 30 mg per dose twice daily

Selected Adverse Events

- Associated with a higher risk of mitochondrial toxicity than other NRTI drugs
- Peripheral neuropathy is dose-related and occurs more frequently in patients who have advanced HIV disease or a prior history of peripheral neuropathy, and in patients receiving other drugs associated with neuropathy.
- Facial/peripheral lipoatrophy
- Pancreatitis
- Lactic acidosis/severe hepatomegaly with hepatic steatosis (higher incidence than with other NRTIs). The risk increases when stavudine is used in combination with didanosine.
- Dyslipidemia
- Insulin resistance, asymptomatic hyperglycemia
- Rapidly progressive ascending neuromuscular weakness (rare)

Special Instructions

- Stavudine can be given without regard to food.
- Shake stavudine oral solution well before use. Keep refrigerated; the solution is stable for 30 days.

Metabolism/Elimination

- Renal excretion 50%. Decrease dose in patients with renal dysfunction.
- Stavudine is phosphorylated intracellularly to the active metabolite stavudine triphosphate.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- *Renal elimination:* Drugs that decrease renal function could decrease stavudine clearance.
- *Other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs)*: Stavudine **should not be administered** in combination with zidovudine because of virologic antagonism.
- *Overlapping toxicities*: The combination of stavudine and didanosine **is not recommended** because of overlapping toxicities. Reported toxicities occur more frequently in adults and include serious, even fatal, cases of lactic acidosis with hepatic steatosis with or without pancreatitis in pregnant women.
- *Ribavirin and interferon*: Hepatic decompensation (sometimes fatal) has occurred in patients with HIV/hepatitis C virus co-infection who are receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), interferon, and ribavirin.
- *Doxorubicin*: Simultaneous use of doxorubicin and stavudine should be avoided. Doxorubicin may inhibit the phosphorylation of stavudine to its active form.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, skin rashes, hyperlipidemia, fat maldistribution
- *Less common (more severe):* Peripheral sensory neuropathy is dose-related. It occurs more frequently in patients with advanced HIV disease, a prior history of peripheral neuropathy, and in patients receiving other drugs associated with neuropathy. Pancreatitis. Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with hepatic steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported.[1-3] The combination of stavudine and didanosine may result in enhanced toxicity (increased risk of fatal and nonfatal cases of lactic acidosis, pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, and hepatotoxicity), particularly in adults, including pregnant persons—**this combination should not be used.** Risk factors found to be associated with lactic acidosis in adults include female sex, obesity, and prolonged nucleoside exposure.[4]
- *Rare:* Increased liver enzymes and hepatic toxicity, which may be severe or fatal. Neurologic symptoms, including rapidly progressive ascending neuromuscular weakness, are most often seen in the setting of lactic acidosis. Noncirrhotic portal hypertension with prolonged exposure.

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval

Although stavudine is Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for use in infants aged ≥14 days and children, it **is no longer recommended** for use by the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living with HIV because it carries a higher risk of adverse effects associated with mitochondrial toxicity and a higher incidence of lipoatrophy than other NRTIs.

Efficacy

Data from multiple pediatric studies of stavudine administered alone or in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) agents demonstrate that stavudine is associated with clinical and virologic response.[5-11] In resource-limited countries, stavudine is frequently a component of initial ART in children, given with lamivudine and nevirapine. Stavudine is often a component of fixed-dose combinations that are not available in the United States. In this setting, reported outcomes from observational studies are good; data show substantial increases in the CD4 T lymphocyte (CD4) cell count and complete viral suppression in 50% to 80% of treatment-naive children.[12-15] In such a setting, where pediatric patients are already predisposed to anemia because of malnutrition, parasitic infestations, or sickle cell anemia, stavudine carries a lower risk of hematologic toxicity than zidovudine, especially in patients receiving trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX) prophylaxis.[16] Short-term use of stavudine in certain settings where access to other ARVs may be limited remains an important strategy for treating HIV in children.[17,18]

Toxicity

Stavudine is associated with a higher rate of adverse events than zidovudine in adults and children receiving ART.[19,20] In a large pediatric natural history study (PACTG 219C), stavudine-containing regimens had a modest—but significantly higher—rate of clinical and laboratory toxicities than regimens containing zidovudine, with pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, and lipodystrophy/lipoatrophy (fat maldistribution) associated more often with stavudine use.[20]

Lipodystrophy and Metabolic Abnormalities

Lipodystrophy syndrome (LS), and specifically lipoatrophy (loss of subcutaneous fat), are toxicities associated with NRTIs, particularly stavudine, in adults and children.[21-24] Stavudine use has consistently been associated with a higher risk of lipodystrophy and other metabolic abnormalities (e.g., insulin resistance) in multiple pediatric studies involving children.[25-33] Improvements in (or resolution of) lipodystrophy were reported in 22.9% to 73% of cases after discontinuation of stavudine in two separate studies.[30,34]

Lactic acidosis with hepatic steatosis, including fatal cases, has been reported with use of nucleoside analogues, including stavudine, alone or in combination with didanosine.[1-3]

Mechanism

Many of the stavudine-related adverse events are believed to be due to mitochondrial toxicity resulting from inhibition of mitochondrial DNA polymerase gamma, with depletion of mitochondrial

DNA in fat, muscle, peripheral blood mononuclear cells, and other tissues.[1,35-37] In a recent analysis involving a large cohort of pediatric patients (PACTG protocols 219 and 219C), possible mitochondrial dysfunction was associated with NRTI use, especially in children receiving stavudine and/or lamivudine.[38]

World Health Organization Recommendations

The World Health Organization (WHO) cautions against using doses of stavudine that exceed 30 mg twice daily. This is in contrast to the FDA-recommended dose of 40 mg twice daily in patients weighing 60 kg or more.[39,40] Studies comparing the efficacy and toxicity of the two doses have consistently shown that both doses have similar efficacy. However, while the 30-mg dose shows lower toxicity than the 40-mg dose, the overall incidence of toxicity with the 30-mg dose is considered to be unacceptably high.[41-45] WHO recommends that stavudine be phased out of use in all patients because of concerns about unacceptable toxicity, even at the lower dose. Safer alternative agents can be prescribed.

Pharmacokinetics

Current pediatric dosing recommendations are based on early pharmacokinetic (PK) studies designed to achieve exposure (area under the curve) in children similar to that found in adults receiving a dose with proven efficacy.[46] Although WHO has recommended using a reduced dose in adults, a similar dose reduction has not been suggested in children. A reduced pediatric dose has been proposed based on PK modeling, but clinical data on intracellular concentrations of the active stavudine triphosphate are lacking.[47,48] Intracellular stavudine triphosphate concentrations have not been measured in neonates.

Formulations

The pediatric formulation for stavudine oral solution requires refrigeration and has limited stability once reconstituted. As an alternative dosing method for children, capsules can be opened and dispersed in a small amount of water, with the appropriate dose drawn up into an oral syringe and administered immediately. Because plasma exposure of stavudine is equivalent whether the drug is administered in an intact or a dispersed capsule, dosing with the dispersal method can be used as an alternative to the oral solution.[49]

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Tipranavir (TPV, Aptivus)

Updated: May 22, 2018
Reviewed: May 22, 2018

Formulations

Oral Solution: 100 mg tipranavir/mL with 116 International Units (IU) vitamin E/mL

Capsules: 250 mg

For additional information, see Drugs@FDA.

Dosing Recommendations

Note: Tipranavir must be boosted with ritonavir. The ritonavir boosting dose used for tipranavir is higher than the doses used for other protease inhibitors.

Pediatric (Aged <2 Years) Dose

- Not approved for use in children aged <2 years

Pediatric (Aged 2–18 Years) Dose

Note: Not recommended for treatment-naive patients

Body Surface Area Dosing

- Tipranavir/ritonavir (TPV/r) 375 mg/m^2/150 mg/m^2, both twice daily (maximum dose is TPV/r 500 mg/200 mg, both twice daily)

Weight-Based Dosing

- TPV/r 14 mg/kg/6 mg/kg, both twice daily (maximum dose is TPV/r 500 mg/200 mg, both twice daily)

Adult Dose

- TPV/r 500 mg (as two 250-mg capsules)/200 mg, both twice daily

Note: Not recommended for treatment-naive patients

Selected Adverse Events

- Rare cases of fatal and nonfatal intracranial hemorrhage
- Skin rash (more common in children than adults)
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Hepatotoxicity: elevated transaminases; clinical hepatitis
- Hyperlipidemia
- Hyperglycemia
- Elevated creatine phosphokinase

Special Instructions

- Administer tipranavir and ritonavir together and with food.
- Tipranavir oral solution contains 116 IU vitamin E per mL, which is significantly higher than the reference daily intake for vitamin E. Patients taking the oral solution should avoid taking any form of supplemental vitamin E that contains more vitamin E than found in a standard multivitamin.
- Tipranavir contains a sulfonamide moiety and should be used with caution in patients with sulfonamide allergy.
- Store tipranavir oral solution at room temperature, 25°C (77°F); do not refrigerate or freeze. Oral solution must be used within 60 days after the bottle is first opened.
- Store unopened bottles of oral tipranavir capsules in a refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C (36°F to 46°F). Once the bottle has been opened, capsules can be kept at room temperature (maximum of 77°F or 25°C) if used within 60 days.
- Use tipranavir with caution in patients who may be at increased risk of intracranial hemorrhage, including individuals with brain lesion, head trauma, recent neurosurgery, coagulopathy, hypertension, or alcoholism, or who use anticoagulant or antiplatelet agents (including vitamin E).
- Use of tipranavir is contraindicated in patients with moderate or severe hepatic impairment.

	Metabolism/Elimination
	• Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) inducer and substrate • P-glycoprotein substrate Tipranavir Dosing in Patients with Renal Impairment • No dose adjustment is required. Tipranavir Dosing in Patients with Hepatic Impairment • No dose adjustment is required for mild hepatic impairment. • Use of tipranavir is contraindicated in patients with moderate-to-severe hepatic impairment.

Drug Interactions

Additional information about drug interactions is available in the Adult and Adolescent Guidelines and the HIV Drug Interaction Checker.

- Tipranavir has the potential for multiple drug interactions. Co-administration of tipranavir/ritonavir (TPV/r) with drugs that are highly dependent on cytochrome P (CYP) 3A for clearance or are potent CYP3A inducers is contraindicated.
- Before tipranavir is administered, a patient's medication profile should be carefully reviewed for potential drug interactions.
- TPV/r is a potent enzyme inducer and has the potential to decrease plasma concentrations of other antiretroviral drugs. TPV/r significantly decreases plasma concentrations of etravirine. Etravirine and TPV/r **should not be co-administered.**
- TPV/r has been shown to decrease raltegravir concentrations. TPV/r dose adjustment **is not currently recommended** when raltegravir is administered twice daily. However, TPV/r **should not be co-administered** with raltegravir HD once daily because significantly lower raltegravir concentrations are likely to occur.
- Tipranavir should be used with caution in patients who are receiving medications known to increase the risk of bleeding, such as antiplatelet agents, anticoagulants, or high doses of supplemental vitamin E.

Major Toxicities

- *More common:* Diarrhea, nausea, fatigue, headache, rash (which is more frequent in children than in adults), and vomiting. Elevated transaminases, cholesterol, and triglycerides. Elevated creatine phosphokinase.
- *Less common (more severe):* Lipodystrophy. Hepatotoxicity: clinical hepatitis and hepatic decompensation, including some fatalities. Patients with chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C coinfection or elevations in transaminases are at increased risk of developing further transaminase elevations or hepatic decompensation (approximately 2.5-fold risk). Epistaxis, which is more common with oral solution than capsule formulation.

- *Rare:* New-onset diabetes mellitus, hyperglycemia, ketoacidosis, exacerbation of preexisting diabetes mellitus, spontaneous bleeding in hemophiliacs. Increased risk of intracranial hemorrhage. Tipranavir should be used with caution in patients who may be at risk of increased bleeding from trauma, surgery, or other medical conditions.

Resistance

The International AIDS Society–USA maintains a list of updated resistance mutations and the Stanford University HIV Drug Resistance Database offers a discussion of each mutation.

Pediatric Use

Approval and General Considerations

Tipranavir is approved for use in children aged as young as 2 years and is available in a liquid formulation.

Its indication is limited to those patients who are treatment-experienced and who have HIV strains that are resistant to more than one protease inhibitor (PI).[1] Tipranavir imposes a high pill burden on patients taking tipranavir capsules and requires a higher dose of boosting ritonavir than the doses used with other PIs. This increased dose of ritonavir is associated with a greater potential for drug interactions and increased toxicity. In addition, tipranavir is associated with serious adverse events (AEs) that limit its use to patients with few treatment options.

Efficacy

The Food and Drug Administration's approval of tipranavir was based on a multicenter, pediatric study of the safety, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics (PKs) of TPV/r in children with HIV (PACTG 1051/BI-1182.14).[2] This study enrolled 110 treatment-experienced children (with the exception of three treatment-naive patients) aged 2 years to 18 years (with a median age of 11.7 years). Patients were randomized to receive two different dosing regimens. The higher dose of TPV/r (375 mg/150 mg/m^2 body surface area [BSA] twice daily) plus optimized background therapy was associated with better virologic responses at 48 weeks, particularly in the older, more heavily pretreated patients, when compared to the lower dose that was studied. A follow-up study of PACTG 1051 participants evaluated the long-term safety, efficacy, and tolerability of TPV/r in pediatric patients.[3] At Week 288, most children were no longer receiving TPV/r. Reasons for discontinuation included AEs, virologic failure, and nonadherence. The youngest patients who were stable at Week 48 were more likely to still be on treatment after 5 years with continued efficacy.[3]

Pharmacokinetics

PK evaluation of the liquid formulation at steady state in children was assessed.[4] In children aged 2 to <12 years, a dose of TPV/r 290 mg/115 mg/m^2 BSA achieved tipranavir trough concentrations that were consistent with those achieved in adults receiving standard TPV/r 500 mg/200 mg dosing. However, children aged 12 to 18 years required a higher dose (375 mg/150 mg/m^2 BSA, 30% higher than the directly scaled adult dose) to achieve drug exposure similar to that seen in adults receiving the standard TPV/r dose. Based on available data, a dose of TPV/r 375 mg/150 mg/m^2 BSA twice daily is recommended.

Toxicity

AEs were similar between treatment groups in the multicenter, pediatric study.[2] Twenty-five percent of children experienced a drug-related serious AE, and 9% of patients discontinued study drugs because of AEs. The most common AEs were gastrointestinal disturbances: 37% of participants had vomiting and 24% had diarrhea. The most common Grade 3 through 4 laboratory abnormalities were increases in the levels of creatine phosphokinase (11% of participants), alanine aminotransferase (6.5% of participants), and amylase (7.5% of participants). In the long-term follow-up report for PACTG 1051, incidence of AEs defined as drug-related was 55% to 65% regardless of age at entry, with higher discontinuation rates due to AEs in the older age groups.[3]

Vitamin E is an excipient in the tipranavir oral solution, with a concentration of 116 international units (IU) of vitamin E and 100 mg tipranavir per mL of solution. The recommended dose of tipranavir (14 mg/kg body weight) results in a vitamin E dose of 16 IU/kg body weight per day, significantly higher than the reference daily intake for vitamin E (which is 30 IU for adults and approximately 6–22 IU for children and adolescents, depending on age of the child or adolescent) and close to the upper limit of tolerability for children. In PACTG 1051, bleeding events were reported more commonly in children receiving tipranavir oral capsules (14.3%) than in children taking tipranavir oral solution (5.75%).[2] Overall, the incidence of bleeding episodes (primarily epistaxis) in pediatric patients observed in clinical trials was 7.5%.[5]

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Appendix B: Acronyms

Updated: September 30, 2025
Reviewed: September 30, 2025

Drug Name Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Name
3TC	lamivudine
ABC	abacavir
ATV	atazanavir
BIC	bictegravir
CAB	cabotegravir
COBI or /c	cobicistat
d4T	stavudine
ddI	didanosine
DMPA	depot medroxyprogesterone acetate
DOR	doravirine
DRV	darunavir
DTG	dolutegravir
EFV	efavirenz
ETR	etravirine
EVG	elvitegravir
FPV	fosamprenavir
FTC	emtricitabine
FTR	fostemsavir
IBA	ibalizumab
IDV	indinavir
LEN	lenacapavir
LPV	lopinavir
MVC	maraviroc
NFV	nelfinavir
NVP	nevirapine
RAL	raltegravir
RPV	rilpivirine
RTV or /r	ritonavir
SQV	saquinavir
T-20	enfuvirtide

TAF	tenofovir alafenamide
TDF	tenofovir disoproxil fumarate
TFV	tenofovir
TFV-DP	tenofovir diphosphate
THAM	tris (hydroxymethyl) aminomethane
TMP-SMX	trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole
TMR	temsavir
TPV	tipranavir
XTC	3TC (lamivudine) or FTC (emtricitabine)
ZDV	zidovudine

General Terms

Acronym	Term
°C	degrees Celsius
°F	degrees Fahrenheit
% v	volume
25-OH-vitamin D	25-hydroxy vitamin D
AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
ACTH	adrenocorticotropic hormone
AE	adverse effect or adverse event
AHR	adjusted hazard ratio
ALT	alanine aminotransferase
ANC	absolute neutrophil count
app	mobile application
ART	antiretroviral therapy
ARV	antiretroviral
ASCVD	atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
AST	aspartate aminotransferase
ATI	analytical treatment interruption
AUC	area under the curve
$AUC_{0–12h}$	area under the curve from time zero to 12 hours postdose
AUC_{12h}	12-hour area under the curve
$AUC_{0–24h}$	area under the curve from time zero to 24 hours postdose
AUC_{24h} or	24-hour area under the curve
AUC_{inf}	area under the concentration time curve extrapolated to infinity
AUC_{tau}	area under the concentration time curve over the dosing interval
AV	atrioventricular
BCRP	breast cancer resistance protein
BHIVA	British HIV Association
BMD	bone mineral density
BMI	body mass index
BSA	body surface area
C_{0h}	pre-dose concentration
C_{12h}	concentration at 12 hours
C_{24h}	concentration at 24 hours
C_{avg}	average plasma concentration
C_{max}	maximum plasma concentration

C_{min}	minimum plasma concentration
C_{tau}	concentration at the end of a dosing interval
C_{trough}	trough concentration
CAR	chimeric antigen receptor
cART	combination antiretroviral therapy
CBC	complete blood count
CD4	CD4 T lymphocyte
CD8	CD8 T lymphocyte
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEPAC	Cost-Effectiveness of Preventing AIDS Complications, a model
CI	confidence interval
CK	creatine kinase
CMV	cytomegalovirus
CNS	central nervous system
COMB-R	cognitive behavioral therapy and medication management algorithm
Cr	creatinine
CRAFFT	Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, and Trouble (questionnaire)
CrCl	creatinine clearance
CT	continuous therapy
CV	cardiovascular *or* coefficient of variation
CVD	cardiovascular disease
CYP	cytochrome P450
CYP2B6	cytochrome P450 family 2 subfamily B member 6
CYP3A	cytochrome P450 3A substrate
DAIDS	Division of AIDS (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)
DBS	dried blood spot
DM	diabetes mellitus
DOT	directly observed therapy
DRESS	drug reaction (or rash) with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms
DT	dispersible tablet
DXA	dual energy X-ray absorptiometry
EBV	Epstein-Barr virus
EC	enteric-coated
EC_{50}	half maximal effective concentration
EC_{90}	90% effective concentration
ECG	electrocardiogram

ECMO	extra corporeal membrane oxygenation
EEG	electroencephalogram
eGFR	estimated glomerular filtration rate
EM	erythema multiforme *or* extensive metabolizer
FCT	film-coated tablet
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FDC	fixed-dose combination
FLP	fasting lipid profile
FPG	fasting plasma glucose
G6PD	glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase
GA	gestational age
GI	gastrointestinal
GLSM	geometric least squares mean
GM	geometric mean
GMR	geometric mean ratio
gp120	glycoprotein 120
HA	height age
HAV	hepatitis A virus
HBcAB	hepatitis B virus core antibody
HBsAb	hepatitis B virus surface antibody
HBsAg	hepatitis B virus surface antigen
HBV	hepatitis B virus
HCV	hepatitis C virus
HD	high dose
HDL	high-density lipoprotein
HDL-C	high-density lipoprotein cholesterol
Hgb	hemoglobin
HgbA1c	glycosylated hemoglobin
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HIV RNA or HIV-1 RNA	viral load
HLA	human leukocyte antigen
HMG-CoA	3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl coenzyme A
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
HSR	hypersensitivity reaction
HSV	herpes simplex virus
IC_{90}	90% maximal inhibitory concentration

IFPG	impaired fasting plasma glucose
IGRA	interferon gamma release assay
IGT	impaired glucose tolerance
IM	intramuscular
IMT	intima-media thickness
INSTI	integrase strand transfer inhibitor
IQ	inhibitory quotient
IQR	interquartile range
IR	insulin resistance
IRIS	immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome
IU	international unit
IV	intravenous
IVIG	intravenous immune globulin
LA	long-acting
LAI	long-acting injectable
LBW	low birth weight
LDL	low-density lipoprotein
LDL-C	low-density lipoprotein cholesterol
LFT	liver function test
$\log_{10}$	the logarithm to the base 10
LS	lipodystrophy syndrome *or* lumbar spine
LVH	left ventricular hypertrophy
MCV	mean cell volume
MEMS	medication event monitoring system
N/A	not available or not applicable
NASBA	nucleic acid sequence–based amplification
NAT	nucleic acid test
NHLBI	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
NHSS	National HIV Surveillance System
NIH	National Institutes of Health
nM	nanomolar
NNRTI	non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor
NPHIV	non-perinatally transmitted HIV
NRTI	nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor
OARAC	Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council
OAT	organic anion transporter

OATP	organic anion transporter polypeptide
OATP1B1	organic anion transporter polypeptide 1B1
OBT	optimized background therapy
OGTT	oral glucose tolerance test
OI	opportunistic infection
OR	odds ratio
P-gp	P-glycoprotein
PA-IC_{95}	protein-adjusted IC_{95}
The Panel	the Panel on Antiretroviral Therapy and Medical Management of Children Living With HIV
PBMC	peripheral blood mononuclear cell
PCP	*Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PG	plasma glucose
PHIV	perinatally acquired HIV
PI	protease inhibitor
PK	pharmacokinetic
POC	point of care
popPK	population PK
PPI	proton pump inhibitor
PR	P wave to onset of atrial depolarization
PrEP	pre-exposure prophylaxis
PWV	pulse wave velocity
QTc	QT corrected for heart rate
RCT	randomized controlled trial
RPG	random plasma glucose
RR	relative risk
RT-PCR	reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction
SAM	severe acute malnutrition
SBIRT	Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment
SCT	short-cycle therapy
SD	standard deviation
SJS	Stevens-Johnson syndrome
SM	slow metabolizer
SMR	sexual maturity rating
SMS	short message service

SOC	standard of care
SQ	subcutaneous
STI	sexually transmitted infection
STR	single-tablet regimen
$T_{½}$	half-life
TB	tuberculosis
TBLH	total body less head
TC	total cholesterol
TDM	therapeutic drug monitoring
TEN	toxic epidermal necrolysis
TG	triglyceride
TIC	trauma-informed care
TMA	transcription-mediated amplification
T_{max}	time to reach maximum concentration
U=U	Undetectable = Untransmittable
UGT	uridine diphosphate glucuronosyltransferase
UGT1A	uridine diphosphate (UDP)-glucuronosyltransferase family 1 member A complex
UGT1A1	uridine diphosphate (UDP)-glucuronosyltransferase family 1 member A complex 1
ULN	upper limit of normal
v/v	volume per volume
w	weight
w/v	weight per volume
WHO	World Health Organization
XR	extended release

Study and Trial Names

Acronym	Name
ACTG	AIDS Clinical Trials Group
AMP	Adolescent Master Protocol
ANRS	National Agency for AIDS Research (France)
ARROW	AntiRetroviral Research fOr Watoto
ATHENA	AIDS Therapy Evaluation in the Netherlands
ATLAS	Antiretroviral Therapy as Long-Acting Suppression
BAN	Breastfeeding, Antiretrovirals, and Nutrition
BRIGHTE	A Multi-arm, Phase 3, Randomized, Placebo Controlled, Double Blind Clinical Trial to Investigate the Efficacy and Safety of Fostemsavir (BMS-663068/GSK3684934) in Heavily Treatment Experienced Subjects Infected With Multi-drug Resistant HIV-1
CALIBRATE	Study to Evaluate the Safety and Efficacy of Lenacapavir (GS-6207) in Combination With Other Antiretroviral Agents in People Living With HIV
CAPELLA	A Phase 2/3 Study to Evaluate the Safety and Efficacy of Long-Acting Capsid Inhibitor GS-6207 in Combination With an Optimized Background Regimen in Heavily Treatment Experienced People Living With HIV-1 Infection With Multidrug Resistance
CHAPAS	Children with HIV in Africa—Pharmacokinetics and Acceptability of Simple second-line antiretroviral regimens
CHER	Children with HIV Early Antiretroviral Therapy
D^2EFT	Dolutegravir and Darunavir Evaluation in Adults Failing Therapy
DolPHIN-2	Dolutegravir in Pregnant HIV Mothers and Their Neonates
DRIVE-AHEAD	Comparison of Doravirine, Tenofovir, Lamivudine (MK-1439A) and ATRIPLA™ in Treatment-Naive Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 (HIV-1)-Infected Participants
DRIVE-FORWARD	Safety and Efficacy of Doravirine (MK-1439) in Participants With Human Immunodeficiency Virus 1 (HIV-1)
DRIVE-SHIFT	Safety and Efficacy of a Switch to Doravirine, Tenofovir, Lamivudine (MK-1439A) in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV-1)-Infected Participants Virologically Suppressed on an Anti-retroviral Regimen in Combination With Two Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors
ECHO	Evidence for Contraceptive Options and HIV Outcomes
ENCORE	Evaluation of Novel Concepts in Optimization of antiRetroviral Efficacy
EPIICAL	Early-treated Perinatally HIV-infected Individuals: Improving Children's Actual Life with Novel Immunotherapeutic Strategies
EPPICC	European Pregnancy and Paediatric Infections Cohort Collaboration
FLAIR	First Long-Acting Injectable Regimen
GEMINI-1 and GEMINI-2	Efficacy, Safety, and Tolerability Study Comparing Dolutegravir Plus Lamivudine With Dolutegravir Plus Tenofovir/Emtricitabine in Treatment naive HIV Infected Subjects
HPTN	HIV Prevention Trials Network
IeDEA-SA	International Epidemiology Databases to Evaluate AIDS Southern Africa

IMPAACT	International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials
LATITUDE	Long-Acting Therapy to Improve Treatment Success in Daily LifE
MOCHA	More Options for Children and Adolescents
NADIA	Nucleosides And Darunavir/Dolutegravir in Africa
NEVEREST	Nevirapine Resistance Study
ODYSSEY	Once-daily DTG based ART in Young people vs. Standard thErapY
OPERA	Observational Pharmaco-Epidemiology Research & Analysis Database
PACTG	Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Group
PAINT	Pediatric Study in Adolescents Investigating a New NNRTI TMC278
PENPACT	Trial run in collaboration between PENTA and PACTG/IMPAACT
PENTA	Paediatric European Network for Treatment of AIDS
PETITE	PharmacokinEtics and safeTy of DolutegravIr in neonaTEs
PHACS	Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study
PIANO	Paediatric study of Intelence As an NNRTI Option
PREDICT	Early Versus Deferred Antiretroviral Therapy for Children Older Than 1 Year Infected with HIV
PROMISE	Promoting Maternal and Infant Survival Everywhere Study
PROMOTE	PEPFAR PROMise Ongoing Treatment Evaluation
PURPOSE-1	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Study of Lenacapavir and Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Alafenamide in Adolescent Girls and Young Women at Risk of HIV Infection
PURPOSE-2	Study of Lenacapavir for HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis in People Who Are at Risk for HIV Infection
SALSA	Regimen Switch to Dolutegravir/Lamivudine Fixed Dose Combination From Current Antiretroviral Regimen in HIV-1 Infected and Virologically Suppressed Adults
SBIRT	Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment
SMILE	Strategy for Maintenance of HIV Suppression with Once Daily Integrate Inhibitor+Darunavir/Ritonavir in Children
SOLAR	A Study to Evaluate Efficacy and Safety of Cabotegravir (CAB) Long Acting (LA) Plus (+) Rilpivirine (RPV) LA Versus BIKTARVY® (BIK) in Participants With Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)-1 Who Are Virologically Suppressed
START	Strategic Timing of AntiRetroviral Treatment
SWORD-1 and SWORD-2	Regimen Switch to Dolutegravir + Rilpivirine from Current Antiretroviral Regimen in Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 Infected and Virologically Suppressed Adults
TANGO	Switch Study to Evaluate Dolutegravir Plus Lamivudine in Virologically Suppressed Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 Positive Adults
THRIVE	TMC278 against HIV, in a once-daily Regimen Versus Efavirenz

Appendix C: CDC Pediatric HIV CD4 Cell Count/Percentage and HIV-Related Diseases Categorization

Updated: Apr.11, 2022
Reviewed: Apr.11, 2022

Table A. HIV Infection Stage Based on Age-Specific CD4 Count or Percentage

Stage[a]	Aged <1 Year		Aged 1 Year to <6 Years		**Aged ≥6 Years**	
	Cells/mm^3	%	Cells/mm^3	%	Cells/mm^3	%
1	≥1,500	≥34	≥1,000	≥30	≥500	≥26
2	750–1,499	26–33	500–999	22–29	200–499	14–25
3	<750	<26	<500	<22	<200	<14

[a] The stage is based primarily on the CD4 count; the CD4 count takes precedence over the CD4 percentage, and the percentage is considered only when the count is missing. If a Stage 3–defining condition has been diagnosed (see Table 6), then the stage is 3, regardless of CD4 test results.

Key: CD4 = CD4 T lymphocyte

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Revised surveillance case definition for HIV infection—United States, 2014. *MMWR* 2014;63(No. RR-3):1-10.

Table B. HIV-Related Symptoms and Conditions

Mildly Symptomatic
Children with two or more of the following conditions, but none of the conditions listed in the Moderately Symptomatic category, are considered mildly symptomatic: • Lymphadenopathy (lymph nodes are ≥0.5 cm at more than two sites and/or bilateral at one site) • Hepatomegaly • Splenomegaly • Dermatitis • Parotitis • Recurrent or persistent upper respiratory tract infection, sinusitis, or otitis media
Moderately Symptomatic
• Anemia (hemoglobin <8 g/dL [<80 g/L]), neutropenia (white blood cell count <1,000 per µL [<1.0 × 10^9 per L]), and/or thrombocytopenia (platelet count <100 × 10^3 per µL [<100 × 10^9 per L]) persisting for ≥30 days • Bacterial meningitis, pneumonia, or sepsis (single episode)

- Candidiasis, oropharyngeal (thrush), persisting for >2 months in children aged >6 months
- Cardiomyopathy
- CMV infection, with onset before age 1 month
- Diarrhea, recurrent or chronic
- Hepatitis
- HSV stomatitis, recurrent (more than two episodes within 1 year)
- HSV bronchitis, pneumonitis, or esophagitis with onset before age 1 month
- Herpes zoster (shingles) involving at least two distinct episodes or more than one dermatome
- Leiomyosarcoma
- Lymphoid interstitial pneumonia or pulmonary lymphoid hyperplasia complex
- Nephropathy
- Nocardiosis
- Persistent fever (lasting >1 month)
- Toxoplasmosis, onset before age 1 month
- Varicella, disseminated (complicated chickenpox)

AIDS-Defining Conditions

- Bacterial infections, multiple or recurrent[a]
- Candidiasis of bronchi, trachea, or lungs
- Candidiasis of esophagus
- Cervical cancer, invasive
- Coccidioidomycosis, disseminated or extrapulmonary
- Cryptococcosis, extrapulmonary
- Cryptosporidiosis, chronic intestinal (>1-month duration)
- CMV disease (other than liver, spleen, or lymph nodes), onset at age >1 month
- CMV retinitis (with loss of vision)
- Encephalopathy attributed to HIV[b]
- HSV: chronic ulcers (>1-month duration) or bronchitis, pneumonitis, or esophagitis (onset at age >1 month)
- Histoplasmosis, disseminated or extrapulmonary
- Isosporiasis, chronic intestinal (>1-month duration)
- Kaposi sarcoma
- Lymphoma, Burkitt (or equivalent term)
- Lymphoma, immunoblastic (or equivalent term)
- Lymphoma, primary (of brain)
- *Mycobacterium avium* complex or *Mycobacterium kansasii*, disseminated or extrapulmonary

- *Mycobacterium* tuberculosis of any site, pulmonary, disseminated, or extrapulmonary
- *Mycobacterium*, other species or unidentified species, disseminated or extrapulmonary
- Pneumocystis jirovecii (previously known as Pneumocystis carinii) pneumonia
- Pneumonia, recurrent[c]
- Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy
- Salmonella septicemia, recurrent
- Toxoplasmosis of brain, onset at age >1 month
- Wasting syndrome attributed to HIV[b]

[a] Only among children aged <6 years.

[b] Suggested diagnostic criteria for these illnesses, which might be particularly important for HIV encephalopathy and HIV wasting syndrome, are described in the following references:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1994 Revised classification system for human immunodeficiency virus infection in children less than 13 years of age. *MMWR.* 1994;43(No. RR-12).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993 Revised classification system for HIV infection and expanded surveillance case definition for AIDS among adolescents and adults. *MMWR.* 1992;41(No. RR-17).

[c] Only among adults, adolescents, and children aged ≥6 years.

Key: CMV = cytomegalovirus; HSV = herpes simplex virus

Modified from:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1994 revised classification system for human immunodeficiency virus infection in children less than 13 years of age. *MMWR.* 1994;43(No. RR-12).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Revised Surveillance Case Definition for HIV Infection—United States, 2014. *MMWR*. 2014;63(No. RR-3):1-10.

Appendix D: Supplemental Information

Updated: Apr.11, 2022
Reviewed: Apr.11, 2022

Table A. Likelihood of Developing AIDS or Death Within 12 Months, by Age and CD4 T-Cell Percentage or Log_{10} HIV-1 RNA Copy Number in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy

CD4 Percentage					Log_{10} HIV RNA Copy Number		
Age	10%	20%	25%	30%	6.0	5.0	4.0
Percent Mortality (95% Confidence Interval)							
6 Months	28.7	12.4	8.5	6.4	9.7	4.1	2.7
1 Year	19.5	6.8	4.5	3.3	8.8	3.1	1.7
2 Years	11.7	3.1	2.0	1.5	8.2	2.5	1.1
5 Years	4.9	0.9	0.6	0.5	7.8	2.1	0.7
10 Years	2.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	7.7	2.0	0.6
Percent Developing AIDS (95% Confidence Interval)							
6 Months	51.4	31.2	24.9	20.5	23.7	13.6	10.9
1 Year	40.5	20.9	15.9	12.8	20.9	10.5	7.8
2 Years	28.6	12.0	8.8	7.2	18.8	8.1	5.3
5 Years	14.7	4.7	3.7	3.1	17.0	6.0	3.2
10 Years	7.4	2.2	1.9	1.8	16.2	5.1	2.2

Note: Table modified from: HIV Paediatric Prognostic Markers Collaborative Study Group. *Lancet*. 2003;362:1605-1611.

Table B. Death and AIDS/Death Rate per 100 Person-Years by Current Absolute CD4 Cell Count andAge in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy (HIV Paediatric Prognostic Markers Collaborative Study) and Adult Seroconverters (CASCADE Study)

Age (Years)	Absolute CD4 Cell Count (cells/mm^3)					
	<50	50–99	100–199	200–349	350–499	500+
Rate of Death Per 100 Patient-Years						
0–4	59.3	39.6	25.4	11.1	10.0	3.5
5–14	28.9	11.8	4.3	0.89	0.00	0.00
15–24	34.7	6.1	1.1	0.71	0.58	0.65
25–34	47.7	10.8	3.7	1.1	0.38	0.22
35–44	58.8	15.6	4.5	0.92	0.74	0.85
45–54	66.0	18.8	7.7	1.8	1.3	0.86
55+	91.3	21.4	17.6	3.8	2.5	0.91

Rate of AIDS or Death per 100 Patient-Years						
0–4	82.4	83.2	57.3	21.4	20.7	14.5
5–14	64.3	19.6	16.0	6.1	4.4	3.5
15–24	61.7	30.2	5.9	2.6	1.8	1.2
25–34	93.2	57.6	19.3	6.1	2.3	1.1
35–44	88.1	58.7	25.5	6.6	4.0	1.9
45–54	129.1	56.2	24.7	7.7	3.1	2.7
55+	157.9	42.5	30.0	10.0	5.1	1.8

Note: Table modified from: HIV Paediatric Prognostic Markers Collaborative Study and the CASCADE Collaboration. *J Infect Dis.* 2008;197:398-404.

Table C. Association of Baseline Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) RNA Copy Number and CD4T-Cell Percentage with Long-Term Risk of Death in HIV-Infected Children[a]

Baseline HIV RNA[c] (Copies/mL) Baseline CD4 Percentage	No. Patients[d]	Deaths[b]	
		Number	Percentage
≤100,000			
≥15%	103	15	(15%)
<15%	24	15	(63%)
>100,000			
≥15%	89	32	(36%)
<15%	36	29	(81%)

[a] Data from the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Intravenous Immunoglobulin Clinical Trial.

[b] Mean follow-up: 5.1 years.

[c] Tested by NASBA® assay (manufactured by Organon Teknika, Durham, North Carolina) on frozen stored serum.

[d] Mean age: 3.4 years.

Source: Mofenson LM, Korelitz J, Meyer WA, et al. The relationship between serum human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) RNA level, CD4 lymphocyte percent, and long-term mortality risk in HIV-1-infected children. J Infect Dis. 1997;175(5):1029–1038.

Figure A. Estimated Probability of AIDS Within 12 Months by Age and CD4 Percentage in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy

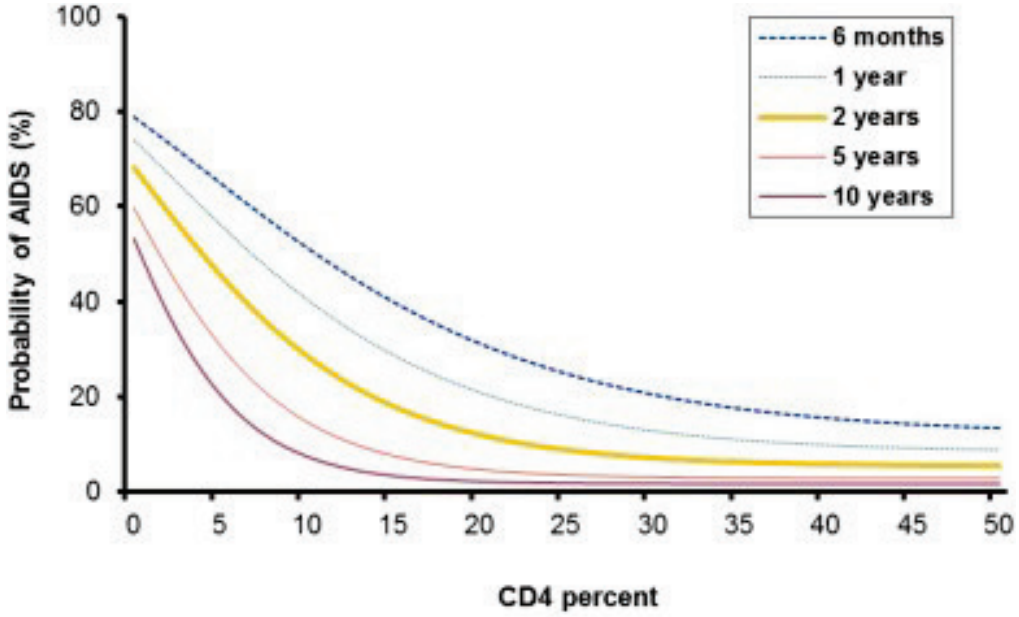


Figure modified from *Lancet* 2003;362:1605-1611

Figure B. Estimated Probability of Death Within 12 Months by Age and CD4 Percentage in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy

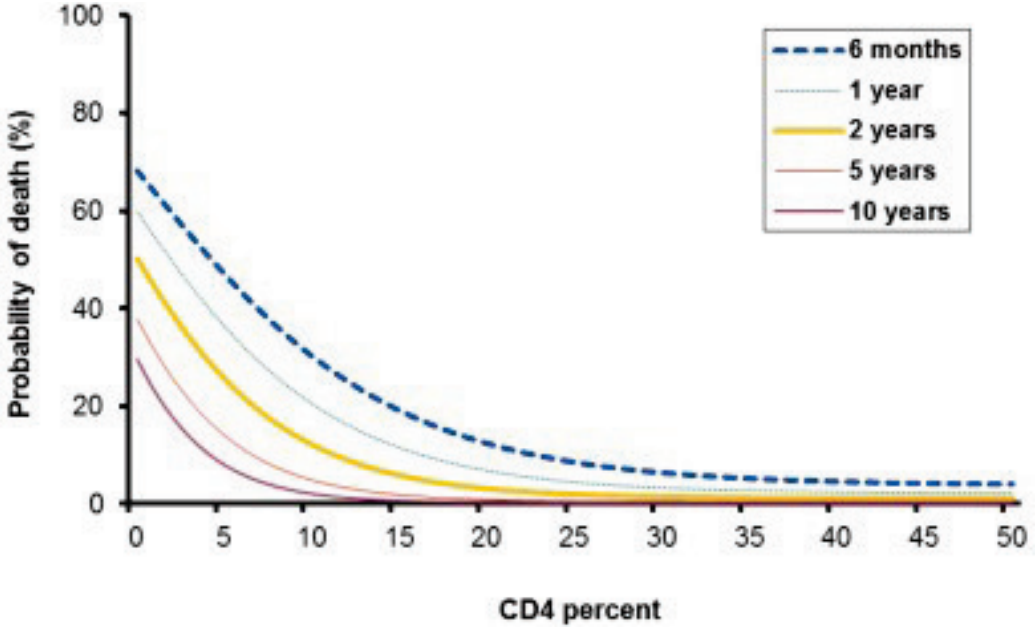


Figure modified from *Lancet* 2003;362:1605-1611

Figure C. Death Rate per 100 Person-Years in HIV-Infected Children Aged 5 Years or Older in the HIV Paediatric Prognostic Marker Collaborative Study and HIV-Infected Seroconverting Adults from the CASCADE Study*

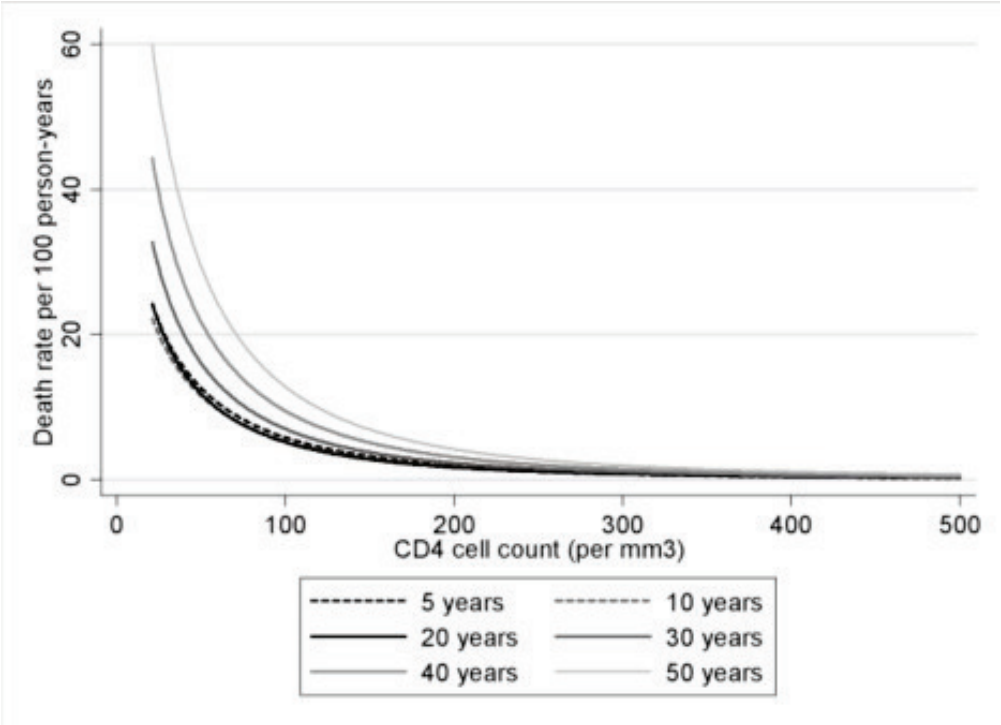


Figure modifed from: HIV Paediatric Prognostic Markers Collaborative Study and the CASCADE Collaboration. *J Infect Dis.* 2008;197:398-404.

Figure D. Estimated Probability of AIDS Within 12 Months of Age and HIV RNA Copy Number in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy

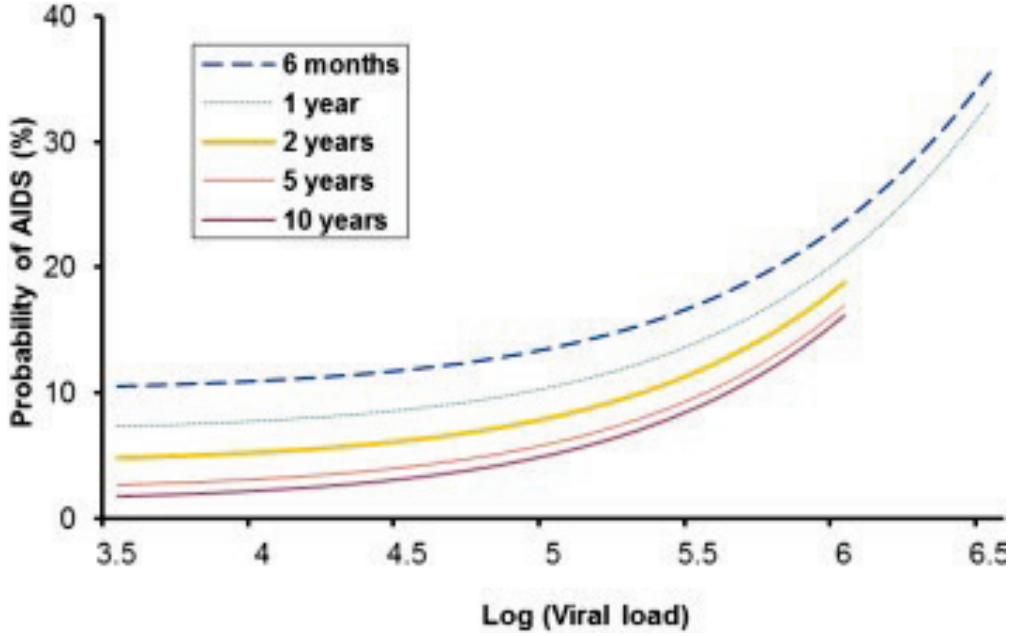


Figure modified from *Lancet* 2003;362:1605-1611

Figure E. Estimated Probability of Death Within 12 Months of Age and HIV RNA Copy Number in HIV-Infected Children Receiving No Therapy or Zidovudine Monotherapy

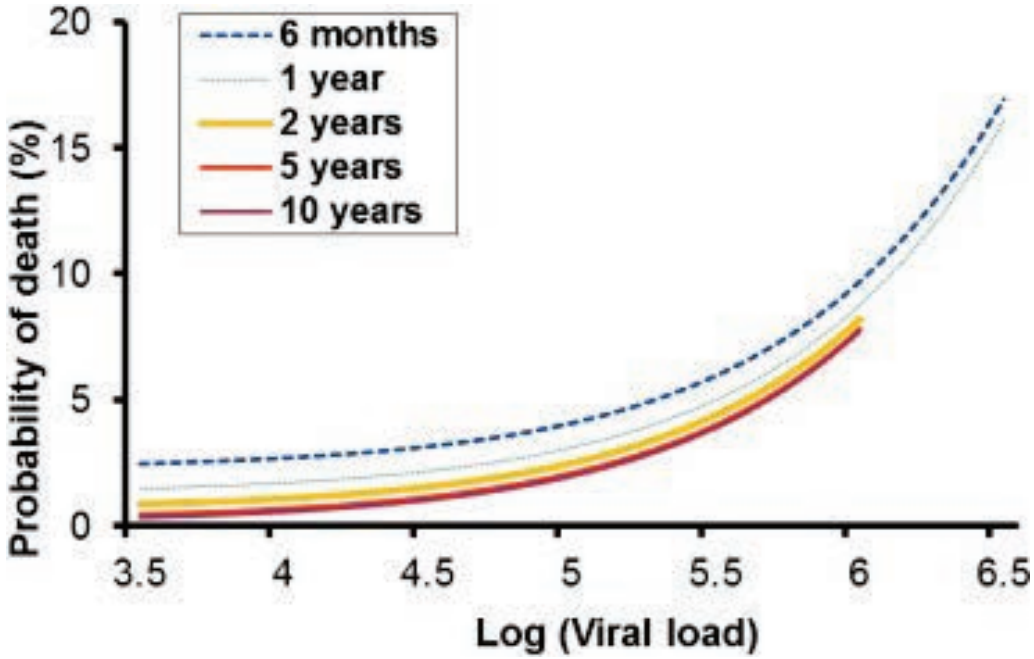


Figure modified from *Lancet* 2003;362:1605-1611