# Efavirenz

***ef-FAH-ver-enz***

**Brand Name:** **Sustiva**

**Drug Class:** **Non-nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors**

Efavirenz, also known as EFV or Sustiva, is a type of medicine called a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). NNRTIs block reverse transcriptase, a protein that HIV needs to make more copies of itself.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Efavirenz was approved by the FDA on September 17, 1998, for use with other antiretroviral agents in the treatment of HIV infection in adults and children ages 3 and older. This medicine does not cure HIV infection or AIDS and does not reduce the risk of passing the virus to other people.

Efavirenz may also be used with other antiretroviral medications to prevent HIV in people who have been exposed to the virus in the work place, such as health care providers who come in contact with HIV infected blood through an accidental needle stick.

## Dosage Form/Administration

Efavirenz comes in capsule and tablet form and is taken by mouth. Efavirenz should not be taken with a high fat meal.

## Recommended Daily Dose

The recommended dose of efavirenz for adults and children weighing more than 88 lbs is 600 mg once a day. The recommended dose for children weighing less than 88 lbs depends on the child's weight. Taking efavirenz at bedtime may decrease some of its side effects. Some individuals may benefit from different doses of efavirenz. Individuals should always take efavirenz as prescribed by their doctors.

## Contraindications

Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine.

## Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, efavirenz can cause some unwanted effects. Serious side effects of efavirenz include abnormal thinking, confusion, depression, hallucinations, memory loss, paranoid thinking, and thoughts of suicide. Some individuals may develop a severe rash. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include nausea, diarrhea, sleep problems, abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, impaired concentration, and changes in certain blood tests. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

## Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications. Patients taking astemizole (Hismanal), cisapride (Propulsid), midazolam (Versed), triazolam (Halcion), or ergot medicines (e.g., Cafergot) should not take efavirenz.

Efavirenz may change the effects of some birth control pills. A second method of birth control should be used while taking efavirenz.

## Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Efavirenz, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at http://www.clinicaltrials.gov. In the Search box, enter: Efavirenz AND HIV Infections.

# Efavirenz

## Manufacturer Information

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## For More Information

Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

• Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET

• Via Live Help: http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET