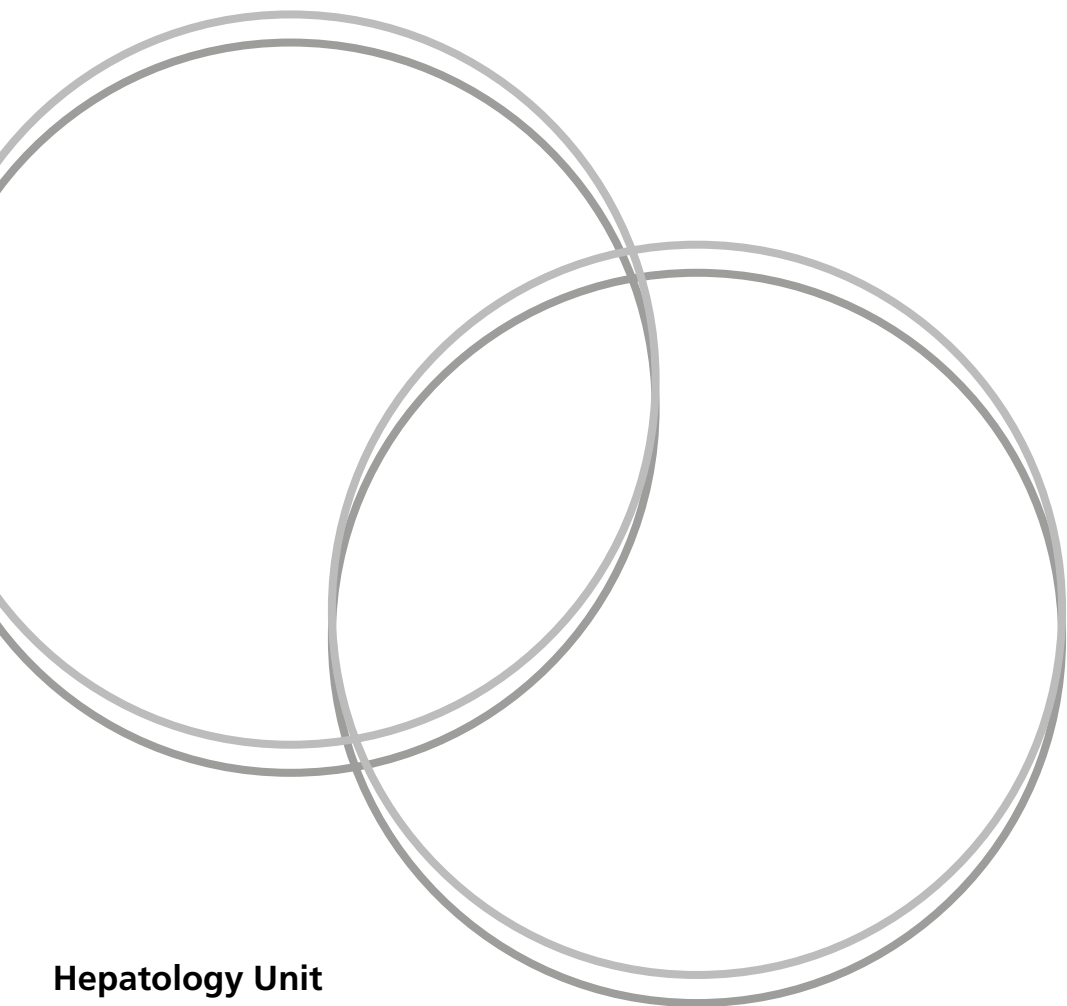




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Entecavir

**Medicines information for patients**



**Hepatology Unit**

# Entecavir

## Why have I been started on this medicine?

Entecavir is an antiviral medicine used in the treatment of Hepatitis B viral infection.

Hepatitis B virus (also known as 'hep B' or HBV) infects the liver, and in some cases can cause long-term liver damage if left untreated.

We will assess your need to start treatment based on your age and sex, blood tests that measure liver inflammation, measurement of the level of the virus in your blood (known as the viral load), and assessment of your liver by fibroscan (a kind of ultrasound scan). We will discuss the results of these tests with you, and use them to advise whether we recommend you need to start treatment.

## How does it work?

Entecavir suppresses the Hepatitis B virus by switching off replication of the virus in your liver. It does not usually lead to cure of the infection, although the virus does completely clear in a few cases (this happens in about 1% of infected adults each year).

Treatment significantly reduces the risk of passing the infection to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. If blood tests consistently show the virus is undetectable, there is a negligible risk of transmission, but it is still wise to make sure you are careful, and that your family are vaccinated.

## What dose will I be taking?

The standard dose is 500 micrograms (one tablet) daily with or without food. Taking the dose at the same time each day will help you to remember to take it. A solution of the medication is available if smaller doses are needed. Entecavir is usually given alone for the treatment of hepatitis B.

## **How long will I be taking it?**

For most people, long term treatment is required. We will monitor you to check that you do not experience side-effects. In a few cases, where we have evidence that the virus has been completely cleared, we may be able to stop treatment.

## **Where do I get supplies of medication from?**

Once treatment is started it is important to ensure that you always have an adequate supply of medication.

Treatment will be prescribed by the hospital Hepatology team and delivered to your home or designated address via a homecare delivery service, usually every 3 months. You will be given a separate information leaflet containing further details about the delivery service.

Several pharmaceutical companies make entecavir so you may occasionally see a change in the packaging. There is no difference in effectiveness, safety or tolerability of different versions. If however you feel you are experiencing more side effects following a change please let us know.

## **What happens if I forget to take a dose or take too much?**

Remembering to take entecavir is necessary for it to work properly.

If you miss a dose you should take it as soon as you remember and then carry on as normal. If it is almost time for the next dose, then you should just take the next scheduled dose. Do not double the dose to make up for a missed dose.

If you have trouble remembering to take the medicine you could consider using an alarm on your phone or a diary or calendar to tick each day. You should contact the hepatology team as soon as possible if you accidentally take too much.

## **What happens if I am sick (vomit) after a dose?**

If vomiting continues for more than 48 hours and you are unable to keep tablets down you should contact the Hepatology team or your GP.

## **What are the common side effects?**

Side effects are rare, and if they do occur are generally mild and include diarrhoea, dizziness, headache, trouble sleeping, tiredness (fatigue), heartburn, feeling sick (nausea), being sick (vomiting).

If side effects are a problem, please talk to the Hepatology team.

**Do not stop taking the medication unless on medical advice.**

## **Do I need any special checks while on treatment?**

You will have regular blood tests to check that the medicine is working properly and to monitor for potential side effects. We will also monitor the condition of your liver via blood tests and scans. You will be given appointments to attend clinic every 3-6 months. If you fail to attend several clinic appointments we will need to review the prescribing of your medicine. You should let us know if you are unable to attend so we can offer you an alternative appointment.

## **Does my treatment interfere with my other medicines?**

Before starting treatment we will check what medicines you are currently taking and check for any interactions. It is important to check with the hepatology team before starting any new medicines to ensure that they do not interact with entecavir. You should not usually take entecavir if you have previously taken lamivudine unless agreed by your hepatologist.

# Is treatment OK in pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Please discuss with the Hepatology team if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant so that we can make sure we provide the right monitoring and treatment. Your midwife should be informed of HBV infection so they can ensure you and your baby receive the right care.

There is no evidence that entecavir is harmful during pregnancy, however we do not have a lot of information about its use in pregnancy. For this reason, if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, we usually advise changing to a different medicine called tenofovir, because we have much more experience of knowing this is safe in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Babies born to mothers with HBV infection should also receive a course of HBV vaccine, starting with a dose soon after birth. In some situations, this will also be accompanied by a one-off dose of antibody therapy ('immunoglobulin') to reduce the risk even further. If this advice is followed, there is no risk of transmitting the infection to your baby through breast milk.

You can safely continue antiviral treatment while breastfeeding.

**If you are admitted to hospital as an inpatient or attend any hospital or GP appointment it is important that you tell a doctor that you are taking entecavir.**

**You should bring your medicine with you when you come to hospital.**

## **Further information is available from:**

The manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) supplied with the medicine.

### **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).**

Hepatitis B (chronic): Diagnosis and management – information for the public (CG 165) 2017

Website: [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg165/ifp/chapter/About-this-information](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg165/ifp/chapter/About-this-information)

### **The British Liver Trust**

Website: [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/)

Alternatively please speak to your hepatologist, pharmacist or nurse specialist:

Tel: **01865 222057**



If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

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Review: March 2022

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