

# Saquinavir

*sa-KWIN-a-veer*

**Brand Name: Fortovase, Invirase**

Saquinavir, also known as Fortovase, and saquinavir mesylate, also known as Invirase, belong to the class of antiretroviral drugs called protease inhibitors (PIs). PIs act by blocking protease, a protein that HIV needs to make more copies of itself.

## **HIV/AIDS-Related Uses**

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Saquinavir mesylate was approved by the FDA on December 6, 1995 and saquinavir was approved by the FDA on November 7, 1997; both are approved for use with other antiretrovirals in the treatment of HIV infection. Although the two drugs are very similar, once in the body, saquinavir is much more effective than saquinavir mesylate. Because of this, saquinavir is the recommended form of the drug, except in unusual cases. These medicines do not cure or prevent HIV infection or AIDS and do not reduce the risk of passing the virus to other people.

## **Dosage Information**

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Saquinavir comes in liquid-filled soft gelatin capsules. Saquinavir mesylate comes in hard gelatin capsules. Both forms should be taken with food. Saquinavir soft gelatin capsules should be stored in the refrigerator; however, they can be kept at room temperature as long as they are used within 90 days.

On December 29, 2003, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that saquinavir mesylate should always be taken along with ritonavir, another PI.

## **Recommended Daily Dose**

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The recommended dose of saquinavir is 1,200 mg (six 200 mg capsules) three times a day or 1,000 mg given along with 100 mg of ritonavir two times a day. The recommended dose of saquinavir mesylate is 1,000 mg given along with 100 mg of ritonavir two times a day. Saquinavir and saquinavir mesylate cannot be used interchangeably.

Some patients may benefit from different doses of saquinavir or saquinavir mesylate. Patients should always take saquinavir and saquinavir mesylate as prescribed by their doctors.

## **Contraindications**

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Patients should tell a doctor about any pre-existing conditions before taking this medicine.

## **Possible Side Effects**

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Along with its desired effects, saquinavir can cause some serious unwanted effects, including changes in body fat, increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia, high sugar levels in the blood, and onset or worsening of diabetes. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have symptoms of 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 anxiety; change in sense of taste; constipation; depression; diarrhea; dizziness; eczema; gas; generalized muscle pain or weakness; headache; mouth sores; nausea; stomach pain; vomiting; trouble sleeping; numbness, pain, or tingling in the hands or feet; rash; unusual tiredness; and warts. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

## **Drug and Food Interactions**

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A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

## **Clinical Trials**

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For information on clinical trials that involve Saquinavir, visit the [ClinicalTrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Saquinavir AND HIV Infections.

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## **Manufacturer Information**

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### Invirase

Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

### Fortovase

Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

### Saquinavir

Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

## **For More Information**

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