

Valtrex (Valacyclovir) basics

Treats viral infections. Valtrex (Valacyclovir) is a first choice treatment for herpes, chickenpox, and shingles. It won't cure the disease, but it'll control the signs and symptoms of an outbreak.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.

| | Hours | Days | Weeks | Months | Long term |
|---|------------------------------------|------|-------|--------|-----------|
| Valtrex (Valacyclovir) Drug effectiveness | [Blue bar spanning Hours and Days] | | | | |
| Possible side effects | | | | | |
| Headache 14% chance vs. 12% placebo* | [Red bar in Hours] | | | | |
| Nausea 15% chance vs. 8% placebo* | [Red bar in Hours] | | | | |
| Dizziness 3% chance vs. 2% placebo* | [Red bar in Hours] | | | | |

* Placebo is a sugar pill with no medicinal benefit.

Tips from pharmacists

- Valtrex (Valacyclovir) should be started as soon as you notice signs of outbreak or infection. For genital herpes or shingles, Valtrex (Valacyclovir) works best when started within 72 hours of symptoms (or within 24 hours of onset of recurrent herpes episodes). For chickenpox, Valtrex (Valacyclovir) should be started as early as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids and stay hydrated while on Valtrex (Valacyclovir), especially if you have a kidney condition.
- Avoid physical contact with others if lesions or prodromal symptoms are present. You may be risking transmission of the virus to others. The virus may also be transmitted without the presence of symptoms. If you have genital or oral HSV, it is important to tell your current and future sexual partner(s). Always practice safe sex.
- This isn't a cure for viral infections, but it'll help control infection breakouts.

Risks and warnings

Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Renal effects

Although rare, Valtrex (Valacyclovir) can seriously harm your kidneys, especially if you have a history of kidney damage. To avoid this, it is important to stay well hydrated while taking Valtrex (Valacyclovir).

CNS Effects

People taking Valtrex (Valacyclovir) have had unexplained bouts of confusion, hallucinations, or seizures. You might be at higher risk of experiencing these if you're taking a high dose of Valtrex (Valacyclovir), are elderly, or if you have damaged kidneys. Talk to your doctor if you notice any of these side effects.

Blood disorders

It's possible to develop a serious blood disorder while taking Valtrex (Valacyclovir). This is very rare and is more likely to happen in people who have a weakened immune system. Call your doctor right away if you notice unusual or unexplained fever, bleeding/bruising, confusion, lethargy, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, or dark urine.