

Managing Side Effects

People with HIV can have many different symptoms and possible side effects of medication. It is important to discuss any symptoms with your doctor.

Call your doctor right away (or 911 if you can't reach your doctor) if you have:

- A rash or hives
- Swollen eyes or a swollen tongue
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing

Call your doctor within 24 hours if you have:

- Fever
- Confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Lightheadedness
- Severe weakness
- Severe headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin)
- Diarrhea including dark urine, lightheadedness, muscle cramps
- Blood in your stool

Talk to your doctor within a few days if you have:

- Muscle pain
- Mild weakness
- Mild headache
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in body fat
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Burning or tingling in the feet
- Strange dreams or difficulty sleeping
- Any other symptoms that are troubling you

Side Effects Chart

Side Effect	Medication	Symptom Management	Important Notes
Diarrhea	Often caused by protease inhibitors (PIs), especially: Viracept (nelfinavir) Agenerase (amprenavir), Kaletra (Aluvia, lopinavir/ritonavir), Isentress (raltegravir), Aptivus (tipranavir), Prezista (darunavir) and Norvir (ritonavir)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids. • Try a diet of BRAT (bananas, rice, apples and toast) • Some other foods that are good to eat are white bread, white rice, noodles, cottage cheese, yogurt, eggs, and potassium-rich foods like bananas, oranges, raisins, dried fruit and baked potatoes. 	<p>Your doctor may prescribe something like Imodium to help reduce the diarrhea.</p> <p>Contact your doctor if the diarrhea is bloody or continues for more than a day, if you have abdominal pain, or if you start to become dehydrated.</p>
Nausea	Often caused by Norvir (ritonavir), Invirase (saquinavir), Agenerase (amprenavir), Kaletra, norvir, Isentress (raltegravir), Intelence (etravirine) Prezista (darunavir), combination drugs with the drug tenofovir in them (such as Atripla, Complera, Truvada, and Viread), and other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat something, even if it's just a little bit. • Don't eat large meals at night • Don't lie down for at least a half an hour after eating. • A small snack before you go to bed or right when you wake up can help morning nausea. • Drink plenty of water. • Drink herbal teas like mint, peppermint, chamomile, or ginger tea. • Go for a walk outside. 	<p>Your doctor may be able to prescribe medications like compazine.</p> <p>You should contact your doctor right away if you vomit right after taking your medications or if you vomit several times in 24 hours.</p>
Rash	Often caused by Bactrim (sulfamethoxazole/ trimethoprim), Ziagen (abacavir) (sign of potentially fatal reaction), Sustiva (Stocrin, efavirenz), nevirapine, Viramune and Viramune XR (nevirapine), Agenerase (amprenavir), Aptivus (tipranavir), Selzentry (Celsentri, maraviroc) and other NRTI's (almost any drug can cause a rash)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a cool bath. • Use a hypoallergenic moisturizer. • Avoid the sun, hot showers, scented lotions and perfumes. • Don't scratch the rash; it will make the itching worse and potentially hurt your skin. 	<p>Call your doctor to help find out what is causing the rash; you may need to go into clinic, as it is often difficult to treat a rash over the phone.</p>
Fatigue	Often caused by Sustiva (Stocrin, efavirenz), EpiVir (lamivudine), combination drugs with AZT in them (such as Combivir, Retrovir, and Trizivir , Combivir, Trizivir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get plenty of rest. Relax or take an afternoon nap. • Eat a well-balanced diet and take a daily multi-vitamin. • Get some exercise; it can boost your energy. 	

Side Effect	Medication	Symptom Management	Important Notes
Headaches	Often caused by combination drugs with AZT in them (such as Combivir, Retrovir, and Trizivir , Zerit (stavudine, D4T), and, Sustiva (Stocrin, efavirenz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try yoga, meditation or acupuncture. • Take a break and give yourself some downtime. • Dehydration can also cause headaches, so make sure to drink a lot of fluids. • Try to avoid bright light, watching television and loud noise. 	<p>Your doctor may be able to recommend some over-the-counter or prescription medications.</p> <p>If your pain is severe or lasts more than a day, contact your doctor right away.</p>
Trouble Sleeping, Strange Dreams, Drowsiness	Often caused by Sustiva (Stocrin, efavirenz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people find that side effects from Sustiva are easiest to cope with if you take it just before bed. • Eat at least 2 hours before going to bed. • Avoid large or high-fat snacks around your Sustiva dose. • Exercise or take a hot shower or bath just before bed, or use lavender-scented products. 	
Weight Loss	Could be caused by a variety of factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include nutrition and exercise as part of a comprehensive treatment strategy for HIV. • When necessary, take a vitamin or other supplements. 	Talk to your doctor if you lose weight. He or she can help monitor your weight and suggest resources and a safe program for maintaining your weight.
Depression	Could be caused by a variety of factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resources and support systems. • Talk with your Patient Navigator. 	If you think your depression is related to your medications, call your doctor right away.

Symptom Management Action Plan

Side Effect	Impact on Adherence	Steps you are currently taking	What you can try now	When to tell your PN or physician

*See side effects chart for suggestions.