Descovy

Generic Name: tenofovir alafenamide + emtricitabine

Pronunciation: des-KOH-vee

Abbreviation: FTC + TAF

Drug Class: Nucleoside/Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTIs)

Company: Gilead Sciences

Approval Status: Approved

Generic Version Available: No

Drug Indication

Descovy is a component of recommended and alternative HIV treatment regimens, as indicated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Descovy is also approved for use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) under some circumstances.

Visit https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/1/adult-and-adolescent-arv-guidelines/0 for the full DHHS guidelines.

Descovy is also recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), but not for those at risk for HIV acquisition via vaginal sex. CDC PrEP guidelines, updated in 2021, can be accessed here: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/prep/cdc-hiv-prep-guidelines-2021.pdf

General Info

Descovy is an HIV medication. It contains two nucleoside/nucelotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs). It was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in April 2016.

Descovy is a fixed-dose combination containing tenofovir alafenamide, or TAF, and emtricitabine. TAF is similar to tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), sold separately as Viread and a component of Stribild, Atripla, Complera and Truvada. TAF, however, can be used at much lower doses and

causes fewer kidney- and bone-related side effects.

For HIV treatment, Descovy must be used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs.

In October 2019, Descovy was also approved for use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV through sex, with the exception of receptive vaginal or frontal sex. A Phase III study of men and transgender women showed that it works as well as Truvada (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate + emtricitabine) for HIV prevention. There has not been a trial of Descovy PrEP for cisgender (non-trans) women.

Dosage

Adult Dose: One tablet once a day. Each tablet contains 200mg emtricitabine + 25mg tenofovir alafenamide fumarate (TAF).

Pediatric Dose: One tablet once a day for individuals age 12 to 18 years who weigh more than 77lbs (35kg).

Dosing Info: Take with or without food.

Side Effects

The most common side effect is nausea.

Descovy may lead to new or worsening kidney problems, though this risk is lower compared with Truvada. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with Descovy.

Descovy may lead to bone problems, though this risk is lower compared with Truvada. Problems may include bones getting soft or thin, which could lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.

If you also have hepatitis B virus (HBV) and take Descovy, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking Descovy. Do not stop taking Descovy without first talking with your healthcare provider.

Drug Interactions

For a review of drug interactions, including prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements that should not be taken with Descovy, consult the Descovy package insert.

Other Info

Before taking this medication, tell your doctor if you have kidney disease or liver disease including hepatitis B or C. In addition, tell your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, if you are breast feeding and all your medical conditions, including all prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements you are taking.

For More Info: https://www.descovy.com/

Co-Pay Program Info: https://www.descovy.com/co-pay-assistance

Patient Assistance Program Info: https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/drug-assistance-programs

Last Reviewed: December 20, 2021
