

Patient Education Information for: **Ribavirin**

(Copegus®, Moderiba™, Rebetol®, Ribasphere® RibaPak®)



What is ribavirin?

- A prescription medication that is used to treat patients with multiple genotypes of hepatitis C.

How does ribavirin work to fight the hepatitis C virus?

- This drug helps prevent the virus from replicating and is used in combination with other medications that treat hepatitis C.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE taking ribavirin?

- If you are on treatment for HIV because some of the treatments (reverse transcriptase inhibitors) may interact with ribavirin.
- If you are taking didanosine or azathioprine because they may also interact with ribavirin.
- If you are a woman of childbearing age, take a pregnancy test each month while you take this drug and for 6 months after stopping ribavirin. If you are a man with a female sex partner who may get pregnant, she will need a pregnancy test each month during your care and for 6 months after you stop this drug. Two forms of birth control should be used if you are sexually active.
- **Tell your doctor about all of the drugs you are taking including prescription, over-the-counter medications, natural products, and vitamins to make sure it is safe to take with ribavirin.
- **Tell your doctor about all your health problems including a history of liver problems, severe anemia, severe kidney problems, if you are on dialysis, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, if you are breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed, or if you have other major health problems.

How is this drug best taken?

- Take this drug with food and with plenty of non-caffeinated liquids.
- Take this drug at the same time every day.
- Avoid missing doses to gain the most benefit from this drug to cure your hepatitis C infection.

What are the possible side effects of taking this drug?

- The most common side effects include headache, difficulty sleeping, upset stomach, diarrhea, hair loss, feeling tired, muscle pain, dizziness, dry skin, and dry mouth.
- Other more severe side effects that rarely occur include a very bad skin reaction, lung problems, liver problems, decreased production of blood cells, increased heart rate, and weight loss.
- These are not all the possible side effects of this drug. If you have further questions about side effects or you experience any of these side effects, call your doctor.

How should I store ribavirin?

- Store at room temperature and avoid leaving medication in an extreme hot or cold environment.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in the bathroom.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you remember.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose on your normal schedule.
- Do not take extra doses or 2 doses at the same time.

All of the above information was adapted from the package insert for ribavirin.

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