

# Pandemic Influenza: How to Take Peramivir to Treat Influenza

## Emergency Use Instructions for Recipients

This document provides information and instructions on how to use the medicine called **peramivir** (pronounced ‘per-AM-i-veer’, also called Rapivab®) during the current influenza or ‘flu’ public health emergency. You (or your child) are being offered peramivir to treat the flu. If you are experiencing flu symptoms, the medicine may help you recover more quickly and may reduce the chance of serious illness from flu. It is your choice whether or not to take the medicine. Read this document to learn the risks and benefits of taking peramivir. If you have questions, talk to a doctor or healthcare provider about taking peramivir.

### What is an influenza pandemic?

An influenza pandemic is a spread of a new influenza A virus worldwide that is very different from current and recently circulating human seasonal influenza A viruses. H7N9 flu is a new flu virus causing severe illness in people. Like seasonal flu, H7N9 spreads from person-to-person and can cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

### What are the signs and symptoms of H7N9 flu virus in people?

People infected with flu, including H7N9 flu, can have symptoms that include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may have diarrhea and vomiting. Severe illnesses and death have occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

### What is peramivir?

Peramivir is a prescription drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat acute, uncomplicated influenza in patients 2 years of age and older who have had symptoms of flu for less than 48 hours. During the current flu emergency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending that peramivir can be used in patients not covered by the FDA approval. This includes patients of all ages (including patients less than 2 years of age), in patients who have had symptoms for more than 48 hours, and in patients who are in the hospital or have flu complications. The CDC believes it is important that peramivir is available for use in these patients to help prevent serious flu complications and flu-related deaths.

### Who should **NOT** take peramivir?

Do not take peramivir if you have had a previous severe allergic reaction to peramivir or any of its components. Before receiving peramivir, you should tell your doctor or healthcare provider if you:

- have kidney disease
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
- are breast-feeding

### How do I take peramivir?

Peramivir will be given to you by your doctor or health care provider. Peramivir is given through a needle placed in a vein, also known as intravenous or IV. The medicine is given through the vein for about 15 to 30 minutes.

### What are common side effects of peramivir?

Diarrhea is the most common side effect of peramivir. If diarrhea symptoms become severe, talk to your doctor or healthcare provider.

### What are possible serious side effects of peramivir?

Serious and unexpected side effects may happen, though they are rare. Cases of potentially life-threatening allergic reaction and serious skin reactions have occurred. Additionally, people with influenza may be at an increased risk for confused thinking, hallucinations, or significant changes in behavior such as irritability, anxiety or reduced awareness of your environment. Seek medical care right away (go to the emergency room or call 911) if you experience:

- Closing of the throat or trouble breathing
- Swelling of the lips, tongue or face
- Severe itching or rash, especially hives and wheals (red, swollen bumps on the skin)

These side effects may go away after you/your child stop receiving peramivir. These are not all of the possible side effects of peramivir.

**What if I am taking other medicines?**

Tell your doctor or healthcare provider about any medications you are taking.

**What other medicines can I take instead of peramivir?**

There are other FDA-approved medicines like oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and inhaled zanamivir (Relenza®) to help treat H7N9 flu and a vaccine to help prevent H7N9 flu. Public health officials will tell you if other medicines are available. The risks and benefits of those medicines will be explained in separate instructions.

**What if I decide not to take peramivir?**

It is your choice whether or not to take peramivir. The flu can become severe and lead to serious complications such as pneumonia or respiratory failure. Some people have died from the current flu virus. If you choose not to take peramivir, your symptoms may last longer and may lead to a more serious illness. Even if you take peramivir, there is still a chance that you may get sicker and develop complications from the flu.

**What is the overall risk-benefit assessment?**

Although peramivir has some potential and serious side effects, the expected benefit of peramivir in helping to treat influenza and reduce the risk of serious complications or death associated with influenza virus A exposure outweighs these risks.

**How do I report side effects or medication errors?**

Tell your doctor or healthcare provider right away of any side effects or medication errors and report the side effect or error to MedWatch at [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or 1-800-FDA-1088.

A federal program called the Countermeasures Injury Compensation Program (CICP) may help pay for costs of medical care and other specific expenses of certain people who have been seriously injured by some medicines or vaccines. If you have been injured by peramivir used to treat influenza during this emergency, you can learn more about this Program by visiting [www.hrsa.gov/cicp](http://www.hrsa.gov/cicp) or by calling 1-855-266-2427 (toll-free).

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